DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 326 860 CS 010 360

AUTHOR Jackson, Peter; And Others
TITLE SWOT--Study Without Tears: A Guide to Effective Study Practices.
INSTITUTION New Zealand Council for Educational Research, Wellington.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-908567-28-6
PUB DATE 82
NOTE 89p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Materials (For Learner) (051)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Content Area Reading; Foreign Countries; Learning Activities; Learning Strategies; *Notetaking; Secondary Education; *Study Habits; *Study Skills
IDENTIFIERS New Zealand

ABSTRACT

This workbook helps students identify those study practices that are ineffective and suggests ways in which existing study habits may be modified and improved. At the beginning of each of the workbook's seven sections is a set of questions concerning the reader's usual study practices. The second part of each section contains advice about the particular study practice of concern. The third part consists of two short exercises designed for practice and to consolidate the learning of the material for the second part. Sections include: (1) The Place of Study; (2) Study Times; (3) Organization for Study; (4) Reading Textbooks; (5) Note-Taking; (6) Studying for Examinations; and (7) Examination Technique. (RS)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

# SWOT

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

K. A. Pickens

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

- ☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- ☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

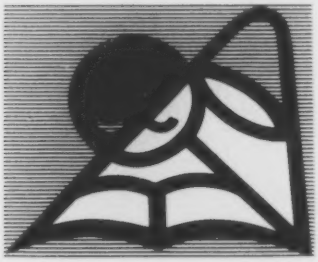
- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

# SWOT

## Study Without Tears



A Guide to Effective Study Practices

Peter Jackson, Neil Reid,
and Cedric Croft

CS010360

New Zealand Council
for Educational Research
*Wellington, 1982*

New Zealand
Council for Educational Research
P.O. Box 3237
Wellington
New Zealand

© NZCER 1982

ISBN 0-908567-28-6

Design by Peter Ridder
Illustrations by Dick Frizzell

In Australia this publication may be obtained from the
Australian Council for Educational Research,
P.O. Box 210, Hawthorn, Victoria.

Printed by Wright & Carman, Trentham,
New Zealand

# Contents

Introduction
How to Get the Most from This Handbook 5

Section 1
The Place of Study 9

Section 2
Study Times 19

Section 3
Organization for Study 29

Section 4
Reading Textbooks 39

Section 5
Note-taking 51

Section 6
Studying for Examinations 65

Section 7
Examination Technique 75

# Introduction

## How To Get The Most From This Handbook

If you are reading this handbook it is almost certainly because you are about to undertake, or are currently involved in, a course of study. It is likely that such a course will include some form of assessment of your learning either during, or at the end of the course, or perhaps both. As the title suggests, the book's content is intended to help you complete your studies successfully (although not effortlessly!) by identifying those of your study practices that are ineffective and by suggesting ways in which they may be modified and improved.

### *How Important Are Effective Study Practices?*

Since you have taken up this handbook it is likely that you have some appreciation of the value of effective study practices already. Their importance has been demonstrated by psychologists and educationists who have shown repeatedly in their research that there is a positive relationship between academic success (gauged by high examination marks or grades) and sound study practices. Generally, students with effective study practices score higher marks in their examinations than do those of similar ability with ineffective study practices; the difference in attainment is both substantial and significant.

### *A Warning Note*

Frequently, books about study practices take a sermonizing tone and imply that the information they provide must be followed to the letter by the reader. Such strict observance of what must, at best, be no more than guidelines, has been avoided in this handbook. Research has also demonstrated equally well that there is no *one, best* way to study which suits everybody — such an ideal is illusory. Clearly, individuals differ so

that, under certain conditions, some people cannot perform well while others excel. Take early morning study, for example: impossible for some students, while others find the quiet of the morning and the freshness after a long, sound sleep conducive to study.

As you read this handbook, keep in mind your personal habits and attitudes. Consider, too, your particular circumstances (e.g., a young family making study out of the question before their bedtime; early-rising flat-mates; a part-time job which at certain times takes priority over study), and modify the advice and guidance given here in the light of your specific situation.

However, despite these qualifications, it is important to remember that:

(i) the suggestions made are supported by learning theory and research and are generally helpful to most people,
(ii) practice of basic study skills is a crucial stage in any educational endeavour.

It is obviously impossible within the following pages to cover all the study situations that students will find themselves facing. This handbook is primarily concerned with stimulating your thinking about what you are doing now. Consider how the guidelines and advice it contains might be modified to suit your particular circumstances and adapt, rather than adopt, what is offered.

## *Why Are You Studying/Taking This Course?*

Reading, learning and practising all that is contained in this handbook will prove to be of limited value unless you are clear about your educational goals or aims. These goals can be considered in a time scale extending from the immediate to the distant future. First, there are short-term aims: these are the things you hope to do today, tomorrow or perhaps next week and may include such tasks as completing a written assignment, a laboratory report or a set reading. Secondly, there are medium-term goals which could include passing your end-of-course examination, or completing a major project such as a thesis.

Finally, there are long-term goals. These are your career goals or ambitions and they are by far the most important; they represent the major reasons for your studying now. Short- and medium-term goals are merely steps along the way, enabling you to do what you want to do ultimately. Hence, you need to plan backwards from your long-term goals through your medium-term goals and relate your courses of study accordingly. Give ample thought to these matters: such serious

decisions should not be made hastily or without good advice from people who are available and willing to help you, e.g., counsellors, heads of department, tutors, graduate students, those who are judged to be successful in the career to which you aspire, and so on.

You must have sound, sensible reasons for taking the particular course for which you have enrolled. Even if you regard it as a 'soft' option or an unpalatable compulsory subject, it must fit your over-all plan, otherwise your efforts will lack purpose or focus. If you don't have a good reason for taking a particular course, in all likelihood your interest and motivation will flag and eventually you may either fail or drop out. Without clear aims and strong motivation to achieve your goals, *any* study practice is likely to be ineffective.

## *Take A Positive Attitude*

Although genuinely convinced that they want to learn, many students approach a course of study with a defeatist attitude, contemplating failure even before they start. They often lack confidence in their abilities and dwell upon the negative rather than the positive outcomes of their efforts. Most people have the intellectual ability to attain the educational goals they set themselves, provided these goals are *realistic*. But even with realistic goals, some students will fail to attain them. This may be because they are insufficiently motivated, lack confidence of personal success, or have little knowledge of effective study practices. This book can help with the latter, but it is your responsibility to motivate yourself to undertake and complete your study, and to adopt a positive attitude towards it — no one else can do that for you!

Essentially the four basic requirements for enhancing your chances of completing a course of study are:

(i) to determine precisely what it is that you want to do,
(ii) to generate the enthusiasm and desire to see the course through,
(iii) to approach the task with the expectation of success,
(iv) to employ effective study practices.

## *Plan Of This Handbook And How To Use It*

Now that you have decided upon your goals, feel quietly confident, and have a positive attitude towards your study, you can begin to read this handbook with every prospect of profiting from the information and advice it contains.

The material is divided into seven separate sections and each section is sub-divided into three parts.

Since it is important to discover what you already know or do, at the beginning of each section you are asked to respond to a number of questions about your usual study practices. You will then mark your answers; the resulting score will indicate your present competency in each area.

The second part of each section contains advice about the particular study practice of concern. Part III consists of two short exercises designed for practice and to consolidate your learning of the material in Part II.

The whole book has been written as a workbook to encourage you to understand the content of each section. Research has demonstrated that retention of material learned actively is greater than when the subject-matter is simply read passively. It is recommended that you engage actively in your reading of what follows in order to gain maximum benefit. To help you do this, the handbook has been printed with generous margins that will allow you to make notes and comments as you proceed. Section 4, in fact, provides guidelines on how to use such margins effectively!

Although the handbook is divided into seven sections there is no requirement that they must be worked through in order from one to seven. You could start with whichever section is of most interest to you, or perhaps with the one that you suspect might be your area of most urgent need or greatest weakness.

# Section 1 The Place of Study

## Part I

Where you study and the conditions under which you study have a considerable effect on how well you learn. The following short questionnaire will help you to assess the adequacy of your conditions and place of study. The questionnaire consists of 20 statements to which you should respond by indicating how often you perform the action described. Using a ballpoint pen, draw a circle around the letter or figure that tells how often you do what is stated. To get maximum value from this exercise you must respond honestly and frankly. If you do not, the results will be worthless.

The five-point scale for the statements is as follows. N = Never or Almost Never, 1 = About ¼ of the time, 2 = About ½ (2/4) of the time, 3 = About ¾ of the time, and A = Always or Almost Always.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | I study in a quiet place. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 2. | I study in a room which other people walk through while I'm studying. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 3. | When I'm studying I get telephone calls. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 4. | I study either in my own bedroom or in a study. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 5. | When I study, I am disturbed by noise. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 6. | Where I'm living it is too noisy to study, except late at night. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 7. | The radio or record player is going in the room where I'm studying. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 8. | I sit in an armchair or on a couch when I'm studying. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 9. | I study in a room where other people are talking. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 10. | When I'm studying I can hear a TV, radio, or record player going. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 11. | When I'm studying I am in a room by myself. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 12. | When I study I sit at a desk or a table. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 13. | The TV is on in the room I am studying in. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 14. | When I study I have to stop and do jobs around the place. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 15. | I study in a kitchen or dining room. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 16. | The lighting of the area in which I study is bright enough. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 17. | Before I can start to study, I have to clear a space to work on. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 18. | After I've been studying for a few minutes I start to feel uncomfortable in whatever position I am in. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 19. | The surface on which I study is at least 1 metre (3 ft) by half a metre (1½ ft) in area. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 20. | After studying for a while my eyes start to feel tired and sore. | N 1 2 3 A |

**Now turn over the page and follow the instructions for marking your responses.**

## Marking and Interpretation

The circles you drew should be showing through onto this page and will appear around a number (hold this page up to the light to assist you). Add all numbers that have circles showing around them. This total is your score for your place of study. Now, on the table, put a cross over the number which corresponds to or is one more than your total score. The interpretation of your score is also given in the table.

| **Marking Key** | *Raw Score* | *Interpreting your Results* |
|---|---|---|
| 2 1 0 0 0 | | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 40 | If your score is 35 or more then you need not complete this section. However, even a maximum score of 40 may not necessarily indicate a perfect place of study and you may still find it worthwhile continuing to read this section. |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 38 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 36 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 34 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 32 | If your score is between 25 and 34 your place of study is above minimal standard; however, there are several important weaknesses. Read this section carefully, and complete the exercises. |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 30 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 28 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 26 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 24 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 22 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 20 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 18 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 16 | If your score is 24 or less there are many serious deficiencies in your place of study which means it does not reach minimal standard. You should study this section carefully, completing the exercises and making a determined effort to improve your conditions of study. |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 14 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 12 | |
| | 10 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 8 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 6 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 4 | |
| | 2 | |
| | 0 | |

# Part II

## Introduction

The physical conditions for good study and learning outlined in this part are those that have proven useful to many students. In many ways the advice offered amounts to a formalization of common sense. Usually, the suggestions can be carried out easily although some of them may involve a little extra work and planning. However, this extra effort will be well directed as you cannot learn as much as you are able to if your study conditions are unsatisfactory. Read the following carefully and then complete the exercises.

## Physical Conditions For Study

### *Lighting*

While it is obvious that light is essential for effective study, its level must be appropriate. Too much light produces glare, which can cause as much eye strain as does too little light. You will also suffer eye strain when you study with a reading lamp shining directly on to the page and have no other lighting. You should control the amount and type of light so that you will be able to study comfortably for long periods.

Normally, the best lighting is a moderate power (75-100 watts) centre ceiling light. This light should be either shaded or not allowed to shine directly on to your work. A desk lamp of low power (40–60 watts) directed on to your work should also be used. This lamp should be shaded and out of your direct line of sight. During the daytime it is best to study near a window, but you must make sure that sunlight does not shine directly into your eyes or on to your books.

If you are studying in the early evening take care that you do not work on into partial darkness. It can become quite dark before you realize it

and you will suffer eye strain as a result. It is better to turn the light on too early rather than too late.

### *Ventilation*

You should ensure that there is a flow of fresh air into your place of study. Re-breathing the same air leads to lowered oxygen levels in the room and an increased air temperature. Eventually, drowsiness, nausea, and headaches will develop, reducing the effectiveness of your studying. These effects can be avoided by allowing a flow of fresh air.

This can be provided by leaving a window or a door partly open. Another way of getting some fresh air is taking a break from your study for a few minutes every so often and going for a walk outside, making sure the door or windows are left open. When you return refreshed, your study room will have been ventilated.

### *Heating*

Unless it is either very hot or very cold, your study will not be greatly affected by the temperature of the room in which you are working. However, your room temperature should be comfortable, and you can adjust it by artificial heating or cooling methods. You can also control it by varying the amount and the type of clothing you wear.

### *Posture and Furniture*

As a general rule, it is best to study seated on a firm-backed chair at a table or desk. You should be able to rest your feet flat on the floor with your thighs completely on the chair seat. The desk should be high enough so that if your hands are placed flat on the desk, your forearms are parallel to the floor. Your desk and chair should match properly; you may have to raise the desk, use a footrest, or put a cushion on the chair. Other positions, for example, lying on the bed or floor, or sitting in an armchair, are *not* good positions for study, especially if you have to write.

### *Space*

The desk or table at which you study should be large enough for an exercise book or folder *and* a textbook to be open at the same time without overlapping and without having to be propped up. The *minimum* clear space for efficient study is about 1 metre (3 ft) by half a metre (1½ ft).

## *Which Room to Use*

You may have little choice in this matter, but you should try to find a place where you can leave your books and related study materials, thereby reducing the amount of setting up required when you want to study. A permanent study place is best, and it should be a place for study alone. If the area is used for hobbies as well, your thoughts about your hobbies may compete with thoughts about study, and affect your concentration.

It is best to use a private area of the place where you are living for study, for example, your bedroom. If you share a bedroom, try to reach an agreement giving each of you time to use it for studying without interruption.

If you are living with your family, areas of the house such as the living room are often noisy, and you will be distracted by the presence of other people. Also, you are less likely to be able to have a place in such a room where you can leave your work set up.

If you are enrolled at a tertiary institution you will probably have library facilities available and perhaps special study rooms. If this is the case, use them, unless you have somewhere better to study. As a rule

they are quiet places conducive to good studying. However, there are one or two risks associated. These are that you will probably meet friends there and there will be a temptation to be distracted by their presence. Remember the amount you learn will not be related to the amount of time you sit in front of your books but only to the amount of time you are working on them. Another potential problem is the visual distractions that can occur. This is caused by the movement of people within the library. Movement is very difficult to ignore and can also lead to your being distracted.

## *Distractions*

As a general rule, both your study room and your study time should be free of distractions. Telephone calls, jobs around the place , and other distractions reduce your study efficiency. Background noises, such as motor mowers or traffic, are distracting, although you can often adapt to them so that they are barely noticed.

Many students prefer to study with a radio on or record player going. It is true that as long as this background noise is relatively quiet, the student, who is concentrating on his work, will not hear it. But to maintain such concentration, he has to use extra energy, and so his study efficiency is bound to suffer.

Conversational noise is much more difficult to 'block out', whether it comes from the TV, the radio, or people inside or outside the place. This is because this type of noise has meaning for you. It is more important to protect yourself from it than from other, perhaps louder, but 'meaningless' noise, like motor mowers. The use of music to mask or cover up the sounds of conversation, motor mowers, or traffic can be valuable. But if you have the volume too high, your study efficiency will fall. You would be better off postponing your study until there was less noise.

You can be distracted as easily through your eyes as through your ears, especially if you have a window you like to look out, or are surrounded by pictures and posters you enjoy looking at. If you have such visual distractions, you can keep them to a minimum by shifting your table away from the window and re-arranging the pictures so that you cannot see them directly when you are studying.

To sum up: You should aim to have a study area free from noise and visual distractions (especially a TV which provides both). If you feel you *must* have some level of background noise, use a type of music which you find allows you to continue studying effectively while it is play–ing, but, *keep it down*.

There is no point in making your study area into a place that is so bleak and uninviting that you dread going into it. It is also unwise to turn it into a blaze of noise and colour — a middle course is required. With some thought and planning you can have your study area attractively decorated and yet be able to study effectively in it.

## How to Carry Out These Suggestions

Many of the suggestions made in this section can be readily implemented. However, if you cannot have what you would like, there are ways of helping things along.

### *Discuss the problem with others involved, e.g., partner, flatmates, parents*

Often others you live with may not realize the need for good study conditions. Further, they may not be aware of what good and poor study conditions are. Get them to read this section and then discuss with them ways in which they could help you improve your study conditions.

### *Think about ways of overcoming your particular problems*

There may be ways of getting the equipment you need for study that you have not tried. Look around at what is available and think of ways of modifying it to suit. Perhaps there is a corner of the garage that could be partitioned off to provide you with reasonable peace and quiet. Perhaps you can get hold of a small second-hand table and chair that you can use as a place to leave your books set up.

### *Institutional Facilities*

Some institutions provide libraries and rooms specifically for study. If the study conditions where you are living do not come up to the standard stated in this section, then use these facilities, bearing in mind the warnings mentioned earlier.

It should now be clear that there are ways of improving your study conditions even though it may seem there are none. Do not sit back and bemoan the absence of a suitable place for study, do something about it. It is, after all, to your own advantage to improve your study conditions.

## Part III

This part is designed to enable you to review what you have read in Part II of Section 1: The Place of Study.

---

*Exercise I:* Fill in the blank spaces with the word you think has been left out. Note that the spaces are all the same size; the length of the space does not indicate the length of the word required.

Your study efficiency, and therefore the amount you learn, can be [1] _____ by changing the place in which you study to match the conditions that have been shown to [2] _____ learning. The lighting of your study area should be [3] _____ too bright nor too dull. Bad lighting results in [4] _____ strain. An indirect central light used together with a [5] _____ desk lamp is best. If you are studying in the late afternoon make sure you turn lights on [6] _____ it starts to get dark. There should be a flow of [7] _____ air through your study area and the temperature should be [8] _____. The [9] _____ clear surface area needed for effective studying is about [10] _____ metre by half a metre. You should [11] _____ in a chair that is of comfortable height and at a [12] _____ of appropriate height. Your study will be more efficient if you [13] _____ using dining or living rooms and if you have a [14] _____ place for study where you can [15] _____ your study materials. You should make [16] _____ effort to [17] _____ distractions to a minimum. Try to study where you [18] _____ hear people talking. Reduce visual distractions by sitting where these [19] _____ be seen directly. Finally, if you have difficulty arranging a study area to suit, [20] _____ something about it, do not just complain.

---

*Exercise II:* In the drawing of a study area there are six features which will prevent the student shown from learning as efficiently as possible. Mark these features on the drawing.

Now compare the words you included in *Exercise I* with the list given. The words you have written need not be exactly the same as those given but they must have the same meaning. For some of the spaces several words of similar meaning have been given. The numbers beside each space show the number of the word on the answer list. Also, compare the faults you identified in *Exercise II* with the faults listed.

---

## Solutions to Exercises

---

*Exercise I:* Suggested Words

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. improved/increased | 2. aid/help/assist | 3. neither |
| 4. eye | 5. shaded/low-powered | 6. before |
| 7. fresh/new | 8. comfortable | 9. minimum |
| 10. one | 11. sit | 12. desk/table |
| 13. avoid/stop | 14. permanent/regular | 15. leave |
| 16. every | 17. reduce/keep | 18. cannot |
| 19. cannot | 20. do | |

If any of the words you used are *different in meaning* to those above, go back to Part II and reread to find out why your answer was different.

---

*Exercise II:* The six features in the diagram that will reduce efficient learning are:

(a) Desk too small;
(b) Chair wrong height;
(c) No back to chair;
(d) No desk light;
(e) Central light shining on books;
(f) Radio going.

---

You must remember that correct completion of this part does not ensure that your studying will improve. You must now use what you have learned in the real study situation; only then will you derive any benefit.

---

### Summary

- Make sure you have adequate light, ventilation, heat, and space available.
- Sit on a suitable chair at a desk or table of comfortable height.
- Use a regular, private place for study.
- Keep both visual and noise distractions to a minimum.
- Make an effort to improve your study conditions.

---

*. . . family areas of the house are often noisy . . .*

19

# Section 2 Study Times

## Part I

The efficient use of time is an important skill to acquire, because it will make learning easier for you. The following short questionnaire will help you to assess the adequacy of your use of study time. The questionnaire consists of 20 statements to which you should respond by indicating how often you perform the action described. Using a ballpoint pen, draw a circle around the letter or figure that tells how often you do what is stated. To get maximum value from this exercise you must respond honestly and frankly. If you do not, the results will be worthless.

The five-point scale for the statements is as follows. N = Never or Almost Never, 1 = About ¼ of the time, 2 = About ½ (2/4) of the time, 3 = About ¾ of the time, and A = Always or Almost Always.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. I study at the same time each day. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 2. I arrange the times I study to fit in with my hobbies and sports. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 3. I wait until I'm in the right mood before I do any study. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 4. I do some study every day. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 5. I have to force myself to study. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 6. I study during the weekends. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 7. I put off doing my homework or assignments until, if I do them at all, I have to rush. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 8. I put off study in favour of my other interests. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 9. I read novels, comics, or magazines when I should be studying. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 10. I do some study during term holidays, long weekends, etc. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 11. When I make plans to study, other interests I have prevent me actually doing it. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 12. Whenever I study, it is after I have done everything else I want to do. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 13. I try to complete my homework or assignments on time even if it means working late to do so. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 14. I talk with friends or go out when I should be studying. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 15. I study only when there is nothing else to do. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 16. I arrange the times I study to fit in with TV programmes I want to watch. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 17. I study only if I really have to. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 18. Whenever I study it is after all the TV programmes I want to watch have finished. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 19. I watch TV or listen to the radio or records when I should be studying. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 20. I keep to regular study times. | N 1 2 3 A |

**Now turn over the page and follow the instructions for marking your responses.**

## Marking and Interpretation

The circles you drew should be showing through onto this page and will appear around a number. Add all numbers that have circles showing around them. This total is your score for your study times. Now, on the table, put a cross over the number which corresponds to or is one more than your total score. The interpretation of your score is given in the table.

| **Marking Key** | *Raw Score* | *Interpreting your result* |
|---|---|---|
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 40 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 38 | If your score is 29 or more then you need not complete this section. However, even a maximum score of 40 may not necessarily indicate a perfect plan of study times and you may still find it worthwhile continuing to read this section. |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 36 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 34 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 32 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 30 | |
| | 28 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 26 | If your score is between 19 and 28 your plan of study is above minimal standard; however, there are several important weaknesses. Read this section carefully and complete the exercises. |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 24 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 22 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 20 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 18 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 16 | |
| | 14 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 12 | If your score is 18 or less, there are many serious deficiencies in your planning of study times which means it does not reach minimal standard. You should study this section carefully, completing the exercises and making a determined effort to improve the way you plan your study time. |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 10 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 8 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 6 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 4 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 2 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 0 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | | |

# Part II

## Introduction

The key to the efficient use of study time is planning. The contents of this part should make you aware of the benefits of planning your study times and of keeping to these plans. If you are not used to planning your study times, you may find it difficult to change your habits and become more organized. However, if you make the effort to plan your time, it will be to your advantage. Not only will the amount you learn increase, but learning will become easier and easier.

### *Note for Correspondence Students*

If you are a correspondence student you should note that the advice in this section relates only to revision and personal study which is in addition to the work required by your course assignments. There is, however, considerable overlap between the principles of designing a study-time guide for the restricted purposes outlined here and for a total correspondence course requirement. You will need to apply these principles to your whole course in allotting times for each subject you are studying. There is not meant to be any inference that the amount of time suggested for study and revision in this section is adequate for a correspondence course. You should spend at least as long on your correspondence assignments as a student attending your course in a normal classroom setting. The time set aside for revision and study discussed in this section is additional to the time you spend on your correspondence assignments.

## When You Should Study

### *Times*

The best time to study varies greatly from person to person. As a result, only a general guide can be given. Nevertheless, most people should be able to fit into the general pattern described.

Study is best done when the subject matter to be studied is fresh in

your mind and when you are fully alert. It follows then that you should do any assignments that may have been set as soon as possible after the relevant lecture or class. At this time, the subject-matter is easily recalled and you will find it easier and quicker to do any assignment or review. In addition, you will find that you will remember the material longer through the effect of repetition. Delaying your work makes it more difficult to recall the material.

Studying when you are tired is not efficient. Even if you do not feel tired, study left until late in the evening will be less effective than study done earlier. You may find yourself finishing your work late but you should never be starting it then. If you finish studying about 10.00 p.m., you will have a chance to relax for a while before going to bed.

Overall, the best plan is to do set assignments as soon as possible, and some revision or reading afterwards. But try to make sure you have finished by 10.00 p.m.

### *Days*

If you are doing a full-time course of study you should try to do some study on every day in which you have classes throughout the term. Many students take Friday evening and Saturday off from study and there is no harm in this. Some students find it beneficial to have a short break from studying. But, if you do take one or more days off, make sure your study plan compensates for it. If you are a part-time student or doing a course that involves you only part-time, then a good rule is to do at least one hour's revision for each hour of classes.

### *Vacations*

During the term vacations you should do some study to help keep the material fresh in your mind. You should not stop studying for the entire period even though vacations are meant to provide you with a break. A few short periods of revision done during the vacations will, in the long run, save you time, effort, and worry.

### *Consistency*

Another rule you should practise when studying is the rule of consistency. Try, as much as possible, to study at the same time each day. Regular study times will help you to settle down to study quickly and, consequently, less time will be wasted.

### *When Travelling To and From Classes*

As you may spend some time on a bus or a train going to and from

classes, you may think that this would be a good opportunity to do some reading or revision. The value of study done at this time depends on whether the bus or train is noisy, and whether you are with friends or by yourself. Generally, if it is noisy or if friends are present, it would be a waste of time to try to study. If it is quiet and you are by yourself, your study efficiency will still only be fair. You may be better off relaxing with your friends or reading a novel or newspaper.

### *Distractions*

If the times that you would prefer to study are those when you are likely to be distracted, you must either change your study times or find a way of reducing the distractions. If distractions are a problem, study *Section 1: The Place of Study* for ideas on how to overcome them.

## How Long Should You Study?

The total amount of time you should spend studying will depend on a variety of factors, including whether your course is full-time or part-time, the type of course, and the method of instruction. A lecture course, for example, at university assumes that some preparation has been done by the student and that additional books and references will be consulted after the lecture. Other courses may not require this and all information required by the student is given by the instructor. As a general rule you should spend an hour reviewing and reading around the information given in a lecture for every hour you spend at lectures. Assignments and additional reading will take extra time. If you are involved in a course that takes a normal day (i.e., 9.00 a.m.–3.00 p.m. or 4.00 p.m.) your out-of-class work should be arranged so that it makes up the balance of an approximate eight-hour working day. There is no advantage from studying for 16 hours each day; you require relaxation as much as you need to be diligent at study.

## How Can You Plan for Study?

There is no reason why you cannot enjoy a social life, play sport, take in entertainment, and still study effectively. The key to enjoying yourself and studying effectively is planning. You should plan your study, social, and sporting activities to fit in with each other. The first step in the effective use of time is to work out a study programme or plan. Draw up a chart (like those shown) with the days of the week and the hours of the day from about 7.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. Shade in the times you are

travelling, in class, or at work. Next, enter in the chart your other commitments, for example, sports practice or club meetings. Now schedule a time for study for each day of the week. The amount of time and the time of day you study will vary, depending on your circumstances, but you should operate on the guidelines above. Make these times fit in with your interests, hobbies, TV, and so on. Make sure you have allowed yourself some time for recreation and relaxation every day.

As well as allotting a total time for study, you must schedule times for all subjects, making sure that each subject is assigned a fair share of the total time (*Section 3: Organization for Study*).

Even though the amount of study you have to do on different days may change, you should keep to the times you have scheduled. If the amount of work to be done is less than required to use up the time, then do some extra revision. On other occasions you may need more time to finish your assignments and then you can 'borrow' from the time you have planned for revision. This time must be 'paid back' when you have no assignments.

## Keeping to Your Plan

After spending time developing a plan, many students stop right there, confusing developing a plan with actually using one. Developing a plan can be fun; keeping to it is much harder. But keep to it you must, if you are going to benefit from it. Keeping to your plan will get easier the longer you continue with it. Eventually it will become a habit, part of your everyday activity. When this happens, you have taken another important step towards becoming an efficient learner.

## Varying Your Plan

Your plan will, inevitably, need to be changed as events occur; your sports practice time may change or a favourite TV programme may come on at a time that you had scheduled for study. If things like this happen, be flexible, but, do not be so flexible that your plan becomes virtually worthless. Keep the changes to as few as possible. Consider carefully whether that new TV show is worth disrupting your plan for. If you do revise your plan make sure that the time set aside for study does not decrease.

If short-term changes are required (for example, a show or film you want to go to), then borrow the time required from a recreation period and 'pay it back' later. But make sure you do repay it. It is possible to be flexible with your plan and yet still keep to it.

**Sample Time Plan 1: Part-time Student**

| Time | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 a.m.–8 a.m. | | | | | | | |
| 8 a.m.–9 a.m. | | | | | | | |
| 9 a.m.–10 a.m. | | | | | | | |
| 10 a.m.–11 a.m. | | | | | | | |
| 11 a.m.– Noon | | | | | | | |
| Noon –1 p.m. | | | | | | | |
| 1 p.m.–2 p.m. | | | | | | Sport | |
| 2 p.m.–3 p.m. | | | | | | Sport | |
| 3 p.m.–4 p.m. | | | | | | Sport | |
| 4 p.m.–5 p.m. | Meal | | Meal | | | | |
| 5 p.m.–6 p.m. | Tech. Class | | Tech. Class | | Meal | | |
| 6 p.m.–7 p.m. | | Meal | | Sports Practice | | Meal | Meal |
| 7 p.m.–8 p.m. | | | | | | | |
| 8 p.m.–9 p.m. | Revision and Assign-ments | | Revision and Assign-ments | Meal | | | Revision |
| 9 p.m.–10p.m. | | | | | | | |

Empty boxes which are times available for recreation could be filled in with a particular activity if there is a regular activity that fits any time slot. The term 'revision' includes all self-initiated study, that is, going over your notes, doing background reading, or preparing for new topics. When a person goes on a block course or effectively becomes a full-time student, then the time plan changes, and should look more like Sample Time Plan 2.

**Sample Time Plan 2: Full-time Student**

| Time | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 a.m.–8 a.m. | | | | | | | |
| 8 a.m.–9 a.m. | | | | | | | |
| 9 a.m.–10 a.m. | | | | | | Revision | |
| 10 a.m.–11 a.m. | | | | | Revision | | |
| 11 a.m. – Noon | | | | | | | |
| Noon –1 p.m. | | | | | | | |
| 1 p.m.–2 p.m. | | | | | | Sport | |
| 2 p.m.–3 p.m. | | | | Revision | | Sport | |
| 3 p.m.–4 p.m. | | | | | | Sport | |
| 4 p.m.–5 p.m. | | | | Sports | Assign-ments | | Revision |
| 5 p.m.–6 p.m. | Assign-ments | Assign-ments | Assign-ments | Practice | Meal | | |
| 6 p.m.–7 p.m. | Meal | Meal | Meal | Meal | | Meal | Meal |
| 7 p.m.–8 p.m. | | | Revision | | | | |
| 8 p.m.–9 p.m. | Revision | Revision | | Assign-ments | | | Revision |
| 9 p.m.–10 p.m. | | | | | | | |

## Putting Off Study

Most students have a great capacity to think of reasons for studying 'later'. Waiting until you are 'in the mood', or until there is nothing else to do will cause you to rush your study. Worse, it may lead to you doing no study at all. A plan designed to suit you and to which you keep will result in easier and more effective learning with a minimum of effort.

Many things will influence when you study, and how much time you can spend studying. The plan you develop may look very different from those shown here. Your personality, your style of study and other individual preferences will all play a part.

This section has concentrated on advice about the total study time and has stated little about individual subjects. This is dealt with in *Section 3: Organization for Study*.

## Part III

This part is designed to enable you to review what you have read in Part II of Section 2: Study Times.

---

*Exercise I:* Fill in the blank spaces with the word you think has been left out. Note that the spaces are all the same size; the length of the space does not indicate the length of the word required.

Study [1] _____ be done when you are alert and when the things you want to study are fresh in your mind. Do not [2] _____ studying late in the evening. If you can, do some study [3] _____ day. If you prefer to have a day without study be sure to [4] _____ up this time on some other day. It is best to do [5] _____ study during any holidays there may be during your course; this will keep the material [6] _____ in your mind. As far as possible, you should study at the [7] _____ time(s) each day. This routine will help you get into the habit of studying. The [8] _____ of time you need to spend studying will depend on many factors but if you are doing a full-time course you should aim to be in classes and studying for about [9] _____ hours a day on average. For those doing part-time courses, a good general rule is [10] _____ hour(s) study for every hour spent in class or at lectures.

You should [11] _____ your study times to fit in with your other interests. You need not miss any pleasure in order to study [12] _____. Make up a chart and [13] _____ your normal week's study and recreation. Retain some [14] _____ in your plan to allow for days when more or less study is required. In any event do not spend [15] _____ time on study than you have scheduled. You must [16] _____ to your plan to gain benefit from it. However, you should accept that some changes will be necessary at times. If long-term changes are needed, then draw up a [17] _____ plan. If short-term ones are required [18] _____ time. Later, you may exchange a recreation for a study period but ensure you [19] _____ the time. It is possible to be flexible and yet [20] _____ to a plan. The use of a [21] _____ will help you to study instead of finding ways to delay your study.

---

*Exercise II:* Develop a personal study-time plan for a normal week. Use the sample plans given in this section as a guide.

---

Now compare the words you included in *Exercise I* with the list given. The words you have written need not be exactly the same as those given but they must have the same meaning. For some of the spaces, several words of similar meaning have been given. The number beside each space shows the number of the word on the answer list. Also, compare the study-time plan you have developed in *Exercise II* with the guidelines given.

## Solutions to Exercises

*Exercise I:* Suggested Words

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. should/must | 2. begin/start | 3. every/each |
| 4. make | 5. some | 6. fresh |
| 7. same | 8. amount | 9. eight |
| 10. one | 11. plan/schedule/ organize | 12. effectively/well/ efficiently |
| 13. plan | 14. flexibility | 15. less |
| 16. keep/stick | 17. new/revised | 18. borrow |
| 19. repay | 20. keep/stick | 21. plan |

If any of the words you used are *different in meaning* to those above, go back to Part II and reread it to find out why your answer was different.

*Exercise II:* Refer to Part II for general guidelines.

You must remember that correct completion of this part does not ensure that your studying will improve. You must apply what you have learned to your programme of study; only then will you derive any benefit.

### Summary

- Study when fresh.
- Plan your study times.
- Keep to your plan.
- Do not put off study.

# Section 3 Organization for Study

## Part I

You may have a satisfactory place to study and a suitable plan of study times, and yet you discover that, almost before you realize it, your study time has passed. You try to remember what you have learned, only to find that it comes to very little. Why? It is possible that the organization of your study time was poor. The following short questionnaire will help you to assess the adequacy of your organization for study. The questionnaire consists of 20 statements to which you should respond by indicating how often you perform the action described. Using a ballpoint pen, draw a circle around the letter or figure that tells how often you do what is stated. To get maximum value from this exercise you must respond honestly and frankly. If you do not, the results will be worthless.

The five-point scale for the statements is as follows. N = Never or Almost Never, 1 = About ¼ of the time, 2 = About ½ (2/4) of the time, 3 = About ¾ of the time, and A = Always or Almost Always.

1. I try to relate what I learn in one topic or subject to what I've learned in other topics or subjects. N 1 2 3 A
2. I keep the books, pens, and so on that I'm using in a particular place. N 1 2 3 A
3. I study in the same way for all the subjects I am taking. N 1 2 3 A
4. My exercise books and folders are untidy and disorganized. N 1 2 3 A
5. I study for about half an hour and then have a few minutes break before restarting work. N 1 2 3 A
6. When I'm studying at home I have to spend time looking for the pens, books, etc., that I need. N 1 2 3 A
7. I make sure I know what an instructor requires before I start an assignment. N 1 2 3 A
8. I spend more time studying subjects that I like than I do on other subjects. N 1 2 3 A
9. When I study I stick at what I'm doing until I finish, no matter how long it takes. N 1 2 3 A
10. When I have to write an essay I write only the copy I submit rather than first making either a rough copy or an outline. N 1 2 3 A
11. My notes for different subjects are mixed together. N 1 2 3 A
12. Before I start to study, I decide what I'm going to do. N 1 2 3 A
13. I spend less time studying for difficult subjects than for easy ones. N 1 2 3 A
14. When I'm unsure of how to do an exercise I look for a model or guide to use. N 1 2 3 A
15. Whenever I study I set a goal as to how much I intend to get through. N 1 2 3 A
16. My work is criticized for poor planning. N 1 2 3 A
17. I plan my study times. N 1 2 3 A
18. I get my assignments finished on time. N 1 2 3 A
19. I follow a general plan of study. N 1 2 3 A
20. When I'm studying I waste a large part of my time day-dreaming. N 1 2 3 A

**Now turn over the page and follow the instructions for marking your responses.**

## Marking and Interpretation

The circles you drew should be showing through onto this page and will appear around a number. Add all numbers that have circles showing around them. This total is your score for your organization of study. Now, on the table beside the marking key, put a cross over the number which corresponds to or is one more than your total score. The interpretation of your score is given in the table.

| **Marking Key** | *Raw Score* | *Interpreting your Result* |
|---|---|---|
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 40 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 38 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 36 | If your score is 27 or more then you need not complete this section. However, even a maximum score of 40 may not necessarily indicate a perfect organization for study, and you may still find it worthwhile continuing to read this section. |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 34 | |
| | 32 | |
| | 30 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 28 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 26 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 24 | If your score is between 17 and 26 your organization for study is above minimal standard; however, there are several important weaknesses. Read this section carefully and complete the exercises. |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 22 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 20 | |
| | 18 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 16 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 14 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 12 | If your score is 16 or less there are many serious deficiencies in your organization for study which means it does not reach minimal standard. You should study this section carefully, completing the exercises and making a determined effort to improve how you organize for study. |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 10 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 8 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 6 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 4 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 2 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 0 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | | |

# Part II

## Introduction

If you try to study without a clear plan in mind and definite goals in view, the time you spend studying will be wasted.

This part provides guidelines on how to use the time you spend studying so you learn more effectively. So read it carefully and think about how you could benefit from changing your current study methods. Then use as many as possible of the suggestions in your study.

## Planning Your Study Time

Plan your study time; not only *when* you will study but also *what* and *how* you will study. Make an effort to decide beforehand what you are going to study during the time you have set aside. Do not sit down to study and then try to decide what you should do. Deciding what you will study, for example, history, is a start, although it is too general. It is better to be more specific, for example, to review your notes on 'The New Zealand Land Wars'.

### *Setting Goals*

Plan exactly how much you want to achieve in the time available. This means you should set a *goal* for each study period. Setting a goal is more difficult than it seems though. Do not set a goal that you cannot possibly reach as you will feel dissatisfied and dispirited. It is unlikely that you would be able to give a topic, such as 'Diesel Engine Theory', which may have taken up a number of class periods, more than a brief and superficial coverage in 15 minutes. You will have to work out for yourself how much *you* can cover in a given length of time. This will depend on how fast you can read with comprehension, the difficulty of the material, and how quickly you can organize your thoughts and write them down. Always try to meet your goals and deadlines, as this will give you a sense of satisfaction. If you miscalculate and cannot

meet a goal, do not become upset. The next time you set yourself a goal, take your past experience into account and plan accordingly.

## *Breaks in Your Study Time*

It is a well known fact of learning that spaced practice (that is, breaking up your study with rest periods) is better than massed practice (that is, not taking breaks). Make your basic study time about half an hour, then take a break of about five minutes. It is probably best to allot at least one hour for study, breaking at the half-hour point for five minutes. During your break, get up, walk around, and have a breath of fresh air. You should relax and forget about your books for a short while. Whatever you do, do not study for more than two hours without a break of about half an hour. Long periods of study without breaks will leave you feeling tired, and will result in comparatively little being learned.

## *The Subjects You Should Study*

As with most people, there are probably subjects that you either like more or find easier than others. It is these that you will probably be tempted to spend most of your time studying. But, learning more and more about one or two subjects at the expense of others is futile. Even if you have no wish to study certain subjects, ultimately you will have to. Putting off study only makes it all the more difficult when the day of reckoning comes.

How can you make yourself work on disliked subjects? Well, you could either force yourself by sheer will-power or you could try one of the three methods suggested here.

*(a) The Premack Principle*

You like studying subject A, but dislike studying subject B. The idea of the Premack Principle is that you deny yourself the enjoyment of studying subject A until you have done some work on subject B. Begin with only a few minutes work on subject B before changing to subject A, then gradually increase the time. In this way, studying subject B becomes less distasteful because of the comparatively enjoyable event that occurs after it, that is, studying subject A. If you dislike study of all subjects, you must find another way of rewarding yourself for studying them, for example, by letting yourself watch TV, by reading a magazine, or by socializing. The basic principle is to reward yourself for doing something you consider unpleasant.

*(b) Vary the Order In Which You Study Subjects*

Probably you leave the study of subjects you dislike until last, when you

are tired. Consequently, you learn little. Draw up a programme of study in which you vary the order of study for each subject. On some nights plan to work on the disliked subject first. By studying the disliked subject when you are fresh, your learning will be more effective. As you come to know more about your disliked subject, you may find it more interesting.

*(c) Programme a Time and Keep to It*

Another way of ensuring you study a disliked subject is to set aside for it the same amount of time that you spend on other subjects. Initially spend this time reading about the subject or just trying to do examples. Do not worry about how much you have learned. Once you are in the habit of spending time working on this subject then you can begin to measure how much you have learned in each session.

## *How Much Time for Each Subject?*

Ideally, you should spend an equal amount of time on each subject. However, you may find that because you have neglected a certain subject, or because you find it more difficult, you need to spend more time on it. If you do give more time to a certain subject, make sure you do not neglect the other subjects. If there is a backlog of work on a certain subject, find the time by increasing the total amount of time you spend studying rather than reducing the time you spend on other subjects.

## *Different Ways for Different Subjects*

You cannot study in exactly the same way for different subjects. It is, however, not possible to consider *all* the ways of studying every subject. You will have to do some thinking of your own on this. Some of the ways you can study are discussed together with two common principles which apply to study for *all* subjects.

The two general rules that apply to all subjects are:

(a) Concentrate on *general ideas* rather than on specific facts. This will lead to a greater understanding of the subject than the mere memorizing of facts will achieve. Moreover, if you concentrate on the general ideas, you will find it easier to learn and remember the facts which support these ideas. So always look for the general idea within each topic.

(b) *Keep up to date*. This is possibly the most important rule of learning. If you allow yourself to get behind in learning what you need

to know in any subject, you will soon find it almost impossible to catch up. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, the larger the backlog of things you must study, the less willing you will be to tackle it. Secondly, as most subjects rely on what you already know to help you learn the next step, if you do not keep up you will find it harder and harder to understand what you are being taught.

*English, Commerce, and Theoretical Topics*

These usually require a great deal of reading and summarizing or note-taking. Concentrate on book-reading skills and using the structure of books to help prepare notes as the important points will sometimes be difficult to identify. You will probably need to read more than just your textbooks to succeed in these subjects. For example, in English, if you are to read a novel by a particular author for study in class, read something else he or she has written to get another view of the author's work.

*Mathematics and Mathematical Topics*

By contrast, courses or parts of courses involving mathematics will require little note-taking. However, as mathematics topics are usually ordered in a hierarchical fashion, that is, each topic builds on previous topics, you must understand fully every step in the chain before going on to the next. If anything is unclear, clarify it before attempting the next step, otherwise you will quickly become overwhelmed. Two ways to make sure you understand each step are:

(i) Ask questions in class when you are unsure about something; and
(ii) Do as many practice problems as you can. Successfully completing practice problems as you go will reduce anxiety at exam time.

*Foreign Languages*

The study of other languages requires a different technique again. As with mathematics there is less need for detailed notes, but grammatical rules, vocabulary, and phrases are very important. Repetition and practice are essential. However, remember that copying out lists of words is not as effective as actively trying to put your thoughts and conversation into the foreign language, and naming objects or describing actions in your environment. The best way to learn how to use a foreign language is to make it relevant to your own life. Use the foreign words and describe your own world rather than relying on disjointed lists of words and rules.

*Practical Topics or Subjects*

While the theoretical component of these will need to be treated as outlined above, the practical aspects require different methods. Clearly

there is little need for extensive note-taking with practical work, however, it is crucial that you complete each practical exercise carefully and honestly. Fudging results or making errors will make it hard for you to do any practical exam well, even if you have studied the theory properly. Make sure you write up carefully each practical exercise you do, if you are required to, and make a few short notes about the exercise for your own use. In addition take every opportunity you get to perfect the techniques and skills required in your practical work. Repeated use of the practical skills needed in your course will be most helpful in your practical exams.

## *Organization of the Materials Needed for Study*

You will not be making the best use of your study time if you spend part of it looking for the things you want to use. Much time can be wasted looking for a pen or a pencil, a book that has been carelessly covered by a magazine, and so on.

Even more time can be lost if your notebooks and folders are untidy and disorganized. Having to search for notes that are important to your study is both frustrating and a waste of time. You should keep notes for each subject separate. *Never* write notes for different subjects on the same sheet of paper; this is certain to lead to confusion and difficulty in finding the material you need. It is also useful to 'flag' topics in your subject folders for rapid location of your notes. Tape a piece of firm paper with the topic name written on it to the first page of notes on that topic, so that it sticks out past the edge of the pages. Start by putting these 'flags' at the top of the page and staggering them so they can all be seen at once. Now your notes can be found quickly.

## *Fulfilling an Assignment*

Some of the tasks you do will be in the nature of set assignments that must be handed in to your instructor at a particular time. There are a few basic principles that you should follow in completing assignments. These are:

(a) Make sure you know *exactly* what your instructor wants. Try to remove any doubts from your mind about what you are to do by finding

out from the most reliable source — your instructor. Relying on other students to clarify your misunderstandings might be useful, *but* you must be *sure* that they *know* exactly what is required. They may be as confused as you are.

(b) The accurate completion of assignments is vital because in-course work is becoming more and more important in deciding whether you pass or fail. Whenever possible, find a model of what is required and use it as a guide. Your instructor may provide you with one. If your assignment does not receive high marks ask your instructor what a model answer would have been like.

(c) The preparation phase of an assignment is at least as important as the final production. The necessary steps in preparing a written report are:

(i) Carefully read the question and identify the problem.
(ii) Plan so you can finish the assignment on time.
(iii) Make an outline of what you want to write.
(iv) Write a 'rough' draft, this will help make the final copy more coherent and presentable.
(v) Read over your 'rough' draft and make any changes that are required.
(vi) Write out your final copy.

Neat handwriting will help your instructor understand what you have written. The planning, outline, and drafts you prepared earlier will help make your presentation more concise and logical.

## Summary

This part has suggested ways in which you can organize your study time and increase your learning efficiency. It would be useful to you if, before you begin, you pose the following questions to yourself:

(a) What subjects have I planned to study today?
(This information will come from your study plan.)
(b) What topics of these subjects will I study?
(c) What do I want to achieve today?
(d) Have I got all the equipment, books, notes, etc., that I need?
(e) Am I putting off the study of any particular topic or subject?
(f) If I have an assignment, do I know *exactly* what I'm expected to do?

If you can give satisfactory answers to these six questions, then you are well on the way to a productive study session.

## Part III

This part is designed to enable you to review what you have read in Part II of Section 3: Organization for Study.

---

*Exercise I:* Fill in the blank spaces with the word you think has been left out. Note that the spaces are all the same size; the length of the space does not indicate the length of the word required.

Unless you [1] _____ your study time properly it is very easy to waste time. You should ensure that the things you need to study with are [2] _____ available; time spent looking for pens, books, and notes is [3] _____. Your notes for different subjects should be kept [4] _____ and labelled for rapid locating. It is very important that you [5] _____ what you intend to cover in any given study period. Set a [6] _____ as to how much you intend to do during a study session. These goals must be [7] _____; do not try to do too much in a study session.

You should divide your time as [8] _____ as possible across all your subjects. [9] _____ a subject, because it is difficult or because you dislike it, does you no good at all. You might try to apply one of the methods discussed in this section in an effort to encourage you to study these disliked subjects.

When studying allow yourself some short [10] _____ but take care not to make your study periods too long or too short. Give yourself a five-minute break every [11] _____ minutes and don't work for more than [12] _____ hours without an extended break. While there are certain common elements involved in study for all subjects you will need to use [13] _____ methods for different subjects. You should concentrate on [14] _____ ideas rather than [15] _____ facts, although you will need to know these as well. You will need to keep up to date in [16] _____ subjects because if you do not it will become very [17] _____ to catch up. Book-orientated subjects like English or Commerce will cause you to concentrate on [18] _____ and note-taking. Mathematics topics will cause you to concentrate on practice [19] _____ and foreign language study will require you to look for ways of memorizing and [20] _____ vocabulary and grammar. For practical subjects you will need to [21] _____ the practical skills required.

When you are confronted with an assignment, such as an essay or project, make sure you [22] _____ what is required. If you don't know, find out from a [23] _____ source. Then [24] _____ your work by preparing outlines and making a rough draft before writing your final copy.

**Turn over the page.**

*Exercise II:* Using your study timetable make out a plan for the study of each subject you are taking. If you do not have a plan then refer to Section 2: *Study Times* to find out how to construct one.

---

Compare the words you included in *Exercise I* with the list given. The words you have written need not be exactly the same as those given but they must have the same meaning. For some of the spaces, several words of similar meaning have been given. The number beside each space shows the number of the word on the answer list. Also, compare the subject time plan you developed in *Exercise II* with the points listed.

---

## Solutions to Exercises

---

*Exercise I:* Suggested Words

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. organize/arrange/plan | 2. readily | 3. wasted |
| 4. separate/apart | 5. plan | 6. goal |
| 7. realistic/attainable | 8. evenly | 9. Avoiding |
| 10. breaks | 11. thirty | 12. two |
| 13. different | 14. general | 15. specific |
| 16. all | 17. difficult | 18. reading |
| 19. exercises/problems | 20. practising | 21. practice/perfect |
| 22. know/understand | 23. reliable | 24. plan |

If any of the words you used are *different in meaning* to those given above, go back to Part II and reread it to find out why your answer was different.

---

*Exercise II:* Features you should have in your subject time plan:

(a) Time allotted for all subjects.
(b) Approximately equal time for each subject.
(c) If you normally avoid studying a particular subject you should have made some provision for extra time for that subject.

---

You must remember that correct completion of this part does not ensure that your studying will improve. You must now use what you have learned in the real study situation; only then will you derive any benefit.

---

### Summary

- Plan when, what, and how you will study.
- Set goals for each study session.
- Give yourself breaks while studying.
- Study each subject equally.
- Use methods of study appropriate for each subject.

# Section 4 Reading Textbooks

## Part I

Books are a basic tool of learning. Efficient reading of them is a very important requirement for successful learning. The following short questionnaire will help you to assess how efficient your textbook reading skills are. The questionnaire consists of 20 statements to which you should respond by indicating how often you perform the action described. Using a ballpoint pen, draw a circle around the letter or figure that tells how often you do what is stated. To get maximum value from this exercise you must respond honestly and frankly. If you do not, the results will be worthless.

The five-point scale for the statements is as follows. N = Never or Almost Never, 1 = About ¼ of the time, 2 = About ½ (2/4) of the time, 3 = About ¾ of the time, and A = Always or Almost Always.

1. When I want to find something in a textbook I flip through the book until I find it. N 1 2 3 A
2. I find the textbooks I have to read dull and boring. N 1 2 3 A
3. I ignore any graphs or tables that there may be in the book I'm reading. N 1 2 3 A
4. When I come across a new word while reading, I try to work out its meaning from the passage. N 1 2 3 A
5. If I read textbooks at all, it is only when an exam is coming up. N 1 2 3 A
6. When I'm reading a textbook I look for the main idea of each passage or paragraph. N 1 2 3 A
7. I skip over the summaries in textbooks. N 1 2 3 A
8. After I've been reading for a short time the words stop making sense. N 1 2 3 A
9. When I read more than one textbook on a topic I become more confused about the topic than I was to begin with. N 1 2 3 A
10. I try to pick out the important points in what I'm reading. N 1 2 3 A
11. I avoid reading textbooks whenever I can. N 1 2 3 A
12. I can read without saying the words quietly to myself. N 1 2 3 A
13. When I want to find a particular topic in a textbook, I use the Index. N 1 2 3 A
14. I skip over any photographs or pictures there may be in the book I'm reading. N 1 2 3 A
15. After reading part of a textbook I see how much I can remember of what I've read. N 1 2 3 A
16. I try to put the important ideas in a textbook into my own words. N 1 2 3 A
17. Before I read any part of a textbook properly I skim through it to get an idea of what is in it. N 1 2 3 A
18. I skip over the parts in a textbook I find hard to follow. N 1 2 3 A
19. To find where a chapter starts in a textbook I use the Table of Contents. N 1 2 3 A
20. When I can't work out the meaning of a new word in any other way, I look it up in a dictionary. N 1 2 3 A

**Now turn over the page and follow the instructions for marking your responses.**

## Marking and Interpretation

The circles you drew should be showing through onto this page and will appear around a number. Add all numbers that have circles showing around them. This total is your score for your textbook reading skills. Now, on the table, put a cross over the number which corresponds to or is one more than your total score. The interpretation of your score is given in the table.

| **Marking Key** | *Raw Score* | *Interpreting your Result* |
|---|---|---|
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 40 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 38 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 36 | If your score is 27 or more then you need not complete this section. However, even a maximum score of 40 may not necessarily indicate perfectly efficient textbook reading, and you may still find it worthwhile continuing to read this section. |
| | 34 | |
| | 32 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 30 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 28 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 26 | If your score is between 19 and 26 your textbook reading efficiency is above minimal standard; however, there are several important weaknesses. Read this section carefully, and complete the exercises. |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 24 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 22 | |
| | 20 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 18 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 16 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 14 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 12 | If your score is 18 or less there are many grave deficiencies in your textbook reading skills which means they do not reach minimal standard. You should study this section carefully, completing the exercises and making a determined effort to improve the efficiency of your textbook reading. |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 10 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 8 | |
| | 6 | |
| | 4 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 2 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 0 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | | |

# Part II

## Introduction

Efficient reading means more than just recognizing the words that are printed. There are ways of improving your reading so you can understand more. Knowing the ways textbook writers arrange their books will help, but much more than this is needed. You will get little from your reading unless you read actively and find ways to interest yourself in what you are reading. This part provides you with information on the organization of textbooks and details of one method of reading actively which may increase both your interest in reading and your understanding of what you read.

## Locating Information

### *Finding the Book You Need*

Sometimes you will have to search for the book you need, and for this you will probably require the skills of using a library. You will need to know how a library is organized, what information is contained in the various reference books, such as dictionaries, atlases, encyclopaedias, and how to use the library catalogues. The procedures of a library are designed to help you find books easily. Explore the library, ask questions about its organization, and practise the skills of finding books and information until you can do it easily. If you are not familiar with the way libraries are organized ask the library staff for help

### *Finding Information in a Book*

There are two basic aids to locating information in the typical textbook. The first of these is the Table of Contents which is found at the front of the textbook. This consists of a list of chapter numbers, chapter titles (and sometimes subheadings), and the number of the page on which each chapter begins. The Table of Contents is best used for locating

general topics within a book. Decide what general topic you want to read about, then read the chapter names and try to find which chapter might be on the topic. As the exact words you are thinking of to describe the topic may not have been used, you should look for words or phrases that have a similar meaning. For example, you would find information on animals that live on mountains in a chapter entitled 'Alpine Creatures'.

The second aid is the Index. This is found at the back of textbooks and gives an alphabetical listing of specific topics and the pages on which discussion of these can be found. Once again you will need to be aware of the possibility that different words from those you are thinking of may have been used. For example, if there is no Index entry for monkey under 'M', you may need to look under 'A' for ape.

The use of either the Table of Contents or the Index is quicker and more certain than flipping through a book until you find something that looks as though it might be on the topic. If you just flip through a book you may miss what you are looking for.

## Reading a Textbook

When you have found the part of the textbook you want to read, do not (as many people do) read it straight through from beginning to end. If you do, you will remember and understand very little of what you have read.

There are many different, efficient reading methods, although they all cover the same general points. For example, there is the PQRST method, the letters standing for five suggested steps in efficient reading, that is, Preview, Question, Read, State, and Test. Another method is SQ3R. These letters stand for the five steps you should take in reading. These steps are Survey, Question, Read, Recite (or recall), and Review. In essence the SQ3R method suggests that you:

(1) **Survey** what you are about to read.
Spend a few moments browsing through the parts of the book you intend to read. Take note of the way the material has been organized by the author; the headings in the text are really the author's outline for the topic. Read the headings and subheadings, look at the pictures, and read their captions; consider why they have been included in this part of the book. Take careful note of any graphs, tables, maps, or diagrams there may be; note the headings used and what is shown. Illustrations, that is, diagrams, photographs, pictures, graphs, maps, should help to explain the text. Finally, if they are provided, read the

introduction and the summary (even if it is right at the end of the section you are reading). At the end of this survey, you will have a good idea of what is included before you read the text.

(2) **Question** what you are about to read.
As you come to the heading for each section, turn it into one or more questions, then try to find the answer to your question(s) when reading the text. For example, a heading 'Farm and Land Settlement Schemes' can suggest several questions: What were these schemes? What was the need for them? How successful were they? The answers to these questions are likely to be in this section. There is now a good reason for reading the section: your interest is aroused and you want to know the answers to your questions. You are on the way to reading effectively!

(3) **Read** the section.
You have accomplished much in the first two steps of the SQ3R method in only a few minutes, and the amount of time you will spend on Step 3 will be reduced. Only now do you actually read the words in the section. Don't just recognize the words; search for the answers to the questions you have posed. If the text refers you to an illustration, spend some time in studying it. As it will help you understand the text, relate the contents of the illustration to the text. You should, of course, take care to note main points which answer questions you have not posed. Sometimes sections will contain information different from that which the heading suggests. Watch out for this.

Generally there is only one main idea in a paragraph, and it will be expressed usually within only one sentence of that paragraph. Almost certainly the answers to the questions you posed will be in this sentence, called the topic sentence, so try to pick it out. The topic sentence could be anywhere in the paragraph, but often it is either the first or the last sentence. The other sentences support, or expand on, the main point stated in the topic sentence.

(4) **Recall** the main points you have just read.
After reading each section put the book aside and try to recall the answers to the questions you posed at the beginning. Also, try to recall other important points which were presented. If you practise recall by noting these main points in writing, you will have a permanent record of what you have read (refer *Section 5: Note-taking).* It is important to recall the main points in your own words when possible. Make sure you are correct by rereading the topic sentence. If you can't remember accurately, reread the section and then try to recall it.

Repeat Steps 2, 3, and 4 for each section until you have read all the material previewed in the survey step.

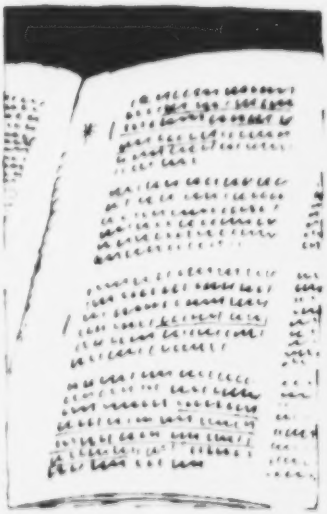
(5) **Review** the main points of your reading.
After you have read the material you surveyed in Step 1, or if you have come near the end of the time you have available for reading, stop and review all you have read, not only the most recent section. In this way, you will consolidate your learning of the material. If you have taken accurate notes during the recall step, you will be able to check the accuracy of your review without rereading all the material.

Learning and remembering information may be thought of in terms of an inoculation. Several small doses given at short intervals after the initial dose are more effective than a single large dose after a long interval. So, although you may spend a little more time reading the material using the SQ3R method, your understanding will be better than it would be if you used the normal 'reading-straight-through' method. You will find that only very short revision sessions are needed to maintain this level of knowledge. In the long run you will save time and effort.

## Marking a Book

Many people do not like the idea of anyone marking a book in any way. However, it is often helpful to mark important points. If you own a textbook, then you might like to follow the guide below. Remember, however, that while marking is a good way of highlighting the major points in a book it must be done with discretion. If too much is marked, the value is reduced.

(a) Underline topic sentences or major points (usually no more than one sentence per paragraph).
(b) Put a vertical line in the margin to emphasize an underlined point that is very important.
(c) Draw a star in the margin beside vertical lines, identifying the most crucial point.



There are other ways of indicating importance, for example, writing a summary note or a key word in the margin, underlining, or circling key words. However, the system suggested is simple and effective. If you cannot or will not mark the book, you must make an effort to record the important points in note form. Advice for writing notes can be found in *Section 5: Note-taking*. If the book has to be returned to a library or elsewhere, make a note of its title, author, and library classification number, so that it can be relocated easily if necessary.

## Some Additional Points About Reading Books

(a) When reading a textbook you may occasionally come across a word you do not know the meaning of. Should this happen, first try to work out the meaning from the context of the passage. If you cannot, you should immediately look up the word in a dictionary or in the glossary. A glossary is a list of meanings of 'special' or 'technical' words and phrases used in the book and is usually found at the end of a book. It may be advisable to look up a dictionary or glossary even if you think you understand the meaning. It pays to make sure you are correct. It is good practice to keep a dictionary nearby when reading.

(b) As you read, you may find that you are 'saying' the words to yourself. That is, your mouth and tongue are making the same movements that they would make if you were reading aloud. This is an inefficient way of reading and means you are reading slowly. If you are not able to read without doing this, you should seek help to improve your reading technique. Your instructor should be able to suggest who, in your area, can help you.

(c) If you find that the words stop making sense after you've been reading for a time, then stop reading. You will get no benefit from continuing. Take a break, then return to your reading. You may find that the length of time you can concentrate on reading will gradually increase if you use the SQ3R method.

(d) Different authors writing about the same subject will have arranged the information in different ways. Almost certainly the same important facts will be included, but sometimes the different arrangements of the material will cause confusion for readers. However, if you remember that different authors probably cover the same information, it may be easier to relate different books to each other. If you have a set of notes based on one book, stay with that organization. Add to your notes information obtained from other sources.

(e) If you are not interested in reading, or in reading the material you are set to read, you may delay reading until you have to, for example, just before an exam. The time pressure that this creates means that there is not sufficient time to read the material properly. If you do not like reading particularly, try to space your reading over a longer period and do a little at a time using the SQ3R method outlined above. You may discover, as you learn more, that reading becomes easier and you may begin to enjoy it!

(f) Different types of books need to be read in different ways. This section has concentrated on the reading of the typical textbook. For reading this type of book the SQ3R method is very suitable, but for reading novels it is not so useful. When reading a novel you can omit some of the steps in the SQ3R method. Nevertheless, you should make sure you carry out some kind of review and take note of the general plot, main characters, style of writing, and other things of interest and importance.

(g) Different types of books need to be read at different speeds. It is obvious that you should not read material you are having difficulty in understanding at the same speed you would read a novel. While in general it is useful to be able to read quickly, the type of book you are reading and the reason you are reading it should be the most influential factors in determining the speed at which you read.

## Summary

This part has pointed the way to more efficient reading using the SQ3R method. However, there are many different methods available although, as has been stated, they all cover the same general points. If you come across other methods of efficient reading compare them to SQ3R; you are almost certain to find they cover similar ground. It doesn't matter which method of efficient reading you use, but it is important for you to improve your reading efficiency. So, if your reading efficiency is poor, use one of the many methods available to improve it.

## Part III

This part is designed to enable you to review what you have read in Part II of Section 4: Reading Textbooks.

---

*Exercise I.* Fill in the blank spaces with the word you think has been left out. Note that the spaces are all the same size; the length of the space does not indicate the length of the word required.

Libraries have been organized to make it [1] _____ to find the books you are seeking. If you do not know how to use the library, or how to use the arrangement of books to find information, ask for [2] _____ from your instructors and librarians. Also, each type of reference book, e.g., dictionaries, atlases, has been planned so it is [3] _____ to find information. You must know how to use these books if your study is to be [4] _____. Most textbooks have two basic devices to help you locate information. Firstly, the Table of Contents is most useful for finding the [5] _____ which discusses the topic in which you are interested and the page on which it begins. Secondly, the Index, which is an [6] _____ _____ ordered list of topics, is most useful for finding the [7] _____ on which specific topics are discussed. Use of either of these systems is [8] _____ than flipping through the pages of the book.

When you read a book you should read actively using a system such as the [9] _____ method. This method suggests you read in five stages. Firstly, you should [10] _____ what you are to read by skimming through it, noting illustrations and reading headings, subheadings, introductions, and summaries.

Then you should [11] _____ by turning headings into questions that may be answered as you read. You should then [12] _____ the text and carefully note the illustrations while trying to answer the questions you posed. [13] _____ the topic sentences and main points made by the author. Next, try to [14] _____ the main points in your own words. Finally, after reading several sections, [15] _____ all you have read. It should be [16] _____ to remember information after using the SQ3R method and eventually you should use [17] _____ time in reading and revision.

It is worthwhile to highlight [18] _____ points in a book using a system of marking. You should do this only if you [19] _____ the book. If you cannot mark a book, record the [20] _____ points on paper in note form.

**Turn over the page.**

If you come across an unfamiliar word in a text try to work out the meaning from the [21] _____ or look up a [22] _____. When you cannot make sense of what you are reading [23] _____ and have a break. If you become confused when reading different books on the same subject try to [24] _____ the points made by one author in the notes you have made from another book. Finally, if you dislike reading do a [25] _____ at a time; gradually you may find that you can read more and more and by using the [26] _____ method you may find you learn better and enjoy reading.

---

*Exercise II:* Your instructor asks you to read a chapter on Sir George Grey. You note the following headings during your survey of the chapter:

(1) Exploration in Australia
(2) Official Appointment
(3) Lieutenant-Governor of New Zealand
(4) Obedience Expected
(5) Champion of the Provinces

What questions might be answered in the section under each heading?

---

Compare the words you included in *Exercise I* with the list given. The words you have written need not be exactly the same as those given but they must have the same meaning. For some of the spaces several words of similar meaning have been given. The numbers beside each space show the number of the word on the answer list. Also, compare the questions you thought might be answered in each section with the list given.

---

## Solutions to Exercises

---

*Exercise I:* Suggested Words

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. easy/simple | 2. help/assistance | 3. easy/simple |
| 4. efficient/effective | 5. chapter | 6. alphabetically |
| 7. page/pages | 8. better | 9. SQ3R |
| 10. survey | 11. question | 12. read |
| 13. Note | 14. recall | 15. review |
| 16. easy/simple | 17. less | 18. important/major/main |
| 19. own | 20. main/major/important | 21. context |
| 22. dictionary | 23. stop | 24. include |
| 25. little | 26. SQ3R | |

If any of the words you used are *different in meaning* to those given above, go back to Part II and reread it to find out why your answer was different.

---

*Exercise II:* Questions for which answers might be found in each section are:

(1) What exploring did Grey do in Australia? Where did he go? What did he find? Who went with him?
(2) What official appointments did Grey receive? What powers did he have? How did he use them?
(3) When did Grey become Lieutenant-Governor of New Zealand? What did he do as Lieutenant-Governor of New Zealand?
(4) From whom was obedience expected? By whom was it expected? Over what matter(s) was obedience expected?
(5) Why did Grey champion the provinces? Who opposed him? Why did they oppose him? Who supported him?

You could expect answers to these, and perhaps to other, questions in the appropriate sections.

---

You must remember that correct completion of this part does not, by itself, ensure that your studying will improve. You must now use what you have learned in the real reading situation; only then will you derive any benefit.

---

**Summary**

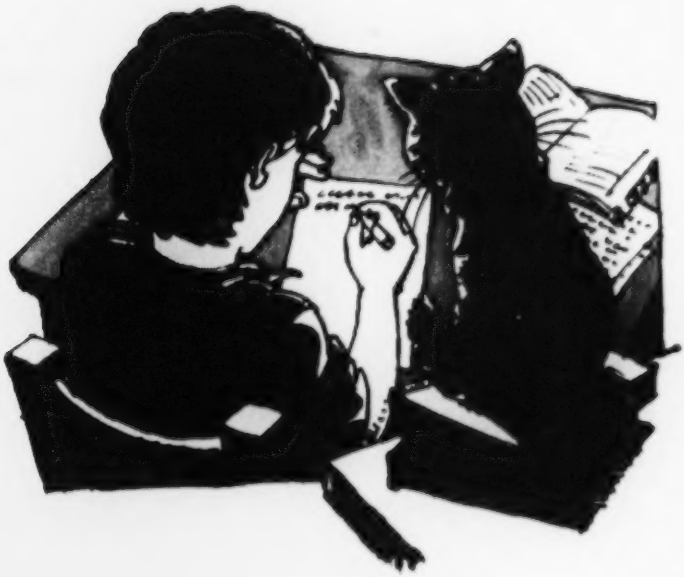
- Use the organization of the library to locate books.
- Use the Table of Contents and the Index to locate information in textbooks.
- Use the textbook author's organization of the topic as an aid to comprehension.
- Use an efficient reading method, for example, the SQ3R:

  Survey
  Question
  Read
  Recall
  Review

To promote speed and understanding:

- Adopt a book marking system to help identify important points.
- Be sensitive to the need to read different materials in different ways.

---



# Section 5 Note-taking

## Part I

Note-taking is a skill that is important to learn well, for it will save you time and increase the effectiveness of your study. The following short questionnaire will help you to assess the adequacy of your note-taking skills. The questionnaire consists of 20 statements which you should respond to by indicating how often you perform the action described. Using a ballpoint pen, draw a circle around the letter or figure that tells how often you do what is stated. To get maximum value from this exercise you must respond honestly and frankly. If you do not, the results will be worthless.

The five-point scale for the statements is as follows. N = Never or Almost Never, 1 = About ¼ of the time, 2 = About ½ (2/4) of the time, 3 = About ¾ of the time, and A = Always or Almost Always.

1. I note any clues about what is important that the instructor may give during a lesson. N 1 2 3 A
2. The notes I take are confused and disorganized. N 1 2 3 A
3. I find my notes contain interesting details, but some important ideas have been omitted. N 1 2 3 A
4. I write a summary of my notes. N 1 2 3 A
5. I combine my class notes with those I've taken from textbooks or other books. N 1 2 3 A
6. I take notes in class only when told to. N 1 2 3 A
7. When I take notes I use my own form of shorthand. N 1 2 3 A
8. The notes I take consist mainly of headings and important words. N 1 2 3 A
9. My notes on a topic exclude some of the important points. N 1 2 3 A
10. I keep my notes in order. N 1 2 3 A
11. I write down the exact words used for definitions. N 1 2 3 A
12. I keep my notes brief. N 1 2 3 A
13. I find it difficult to understand my notes when I look at them later. N 1 2 3 A
14. I use the subheadings of a book as the framework for any notes I take from it. N 1 2 3 A
15. I put ideas from textbooks and lessons into my own words. N 1 2 3 A
16. In class I take fewer notes than I'm instructed to. N 1 2 3 A
17. I take notes using a framework of the main point firstly, with less important points under it, and so on. N 1 2 3 A
18. I write down the exact words used by the instructor whenever possible. N 1 2 3 A
19. My notes contain information of little importance. N 1 2 3 A
20. My notes are mainly in the form of complete sentences. N 1 2 3 A

**Now turn over the page and follow the instructions for marking your responses.**

## Marking and Interpretation

The circles you drew should be showing through onto this page and will appear around a number. Add all numbers that have circles showing around them. This total is your score for your note-taking skills. Now, on the table, put a cross over the number which corresponds to or is one more than your total score. The interpretation of your score is given in the table.

| **Marking Key** | *Raw Score* | *Interpreting your Result* |
|---|---|---|
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 40 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 38 | |
| | 36 | If your score is 25 or more then you need not complete this section. However, even a maximum score of 40 may not necessarily indicate perfect note-taking skills and you may still find it worthwhile continuing to read this section. |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 34 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 32 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 30 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 28 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 26 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 24 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 22 | If your score is between 17 and 24 your note-taking skills are above minimal standard; however, there are several weaknesses. Read this section carefully and complete the exercises. |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 20 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 18 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 16 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 14 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 12 | If your score is 16 or less there are many grave deficiencies in your note-taking skills which means they do not reach minimal standard. You should study this section carefully, completing the exercises and making a determined effort to improve the way you take notes. |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 10 | |
| | 8 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 6 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 4 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 2 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 0 | |

# Part II

## Introduction

Good notes will help to focus your thinking and speed up the process of learning whenever you study. The suggestions made in this part should help improve your note-taking skills. They have proved useful for many students and the method advocated is considered to be the most helpful.

Study this part carefully and consider how your note-taking methods compare with the method outlined. Then complete the review exercises.

## Note-taking

### *I. When Should Notes Be Taken?*

(a) When reading or listening to new material:
  (i) from books (including novels);

  (ii) in class, lectures, practical sessions, etc.

### *II. What You Need For Taking Notes*

(a) Loose-leaf pads.

(b) Separate files or binders for each subject.

(c) Pencils for preliminary notes and pens for writing out permanent ones.

### *III. How Many Notes Should Be Taken?*

(a) Depends on subject.

(b) Minimum requirement is all points your instructor tells you to note.

(c) Add any other points you think are important.

### *IV. What Should Be Included?*

(a) Notes taken in class or lectures:
  (i) *All* main points.

  (ii) Include information, not just headings.

## Comment

Notes from textbooks will reinforce points made in class. Notes from novels will assist in remembering characters, actions, details of the plot, style of writing, and other points of importance.

Instructors may tell you what notes should be made or they may hand out prepared notes. However, the responsibility for taking notes is your own, so you must develop adequate note-taking skills.

Loose-leaf folders allow flexible organization.

Notes for different subjects must be kept apart to avoid confusion.

You will probably take fewer notes in practical subjects or topics than in theoretical subjects or topics.

If you have not written down the points indicated by your instructor, you cannot have *all* the important points recorded.

Instructors may not tell you what is important: you must learn to judge. Different instructors will have different ways of showing emphasis: try to learn them. Be sure to ask if you are uncertain about whether or not a point is important.

It is essential to note all main points. You can't know all you need about a topic if your notes do not contain all important points. One of the chief skills in note-taking is identifying the main points. So practise this skill whenever you are listening or reading. Compare the points which you regard as important with those that others think important.

For example, if the topic is 'Sport' and you take the following notes:
(a) Definition
(b) Characteristic types of sport
(c) Value of sport
(d) Conclusion
then you have noted the way the speaker or writer organized the presentation of the topic. Your notes tell you nothing of what the speaker thought about sport, what the definition was, and so on.

(iii) Include illustrations.

(iv) Write down definitions exactly.

(v) Include *important* dates, figures, formulae, etc.

(vi) Omit *minor* details.

(vii) Use your own words (except for definitions; see (iv) above).

(viii) Include an example if possible.

(b) Books:

(i) *Only* important points and important supporting details should be underlined or noted.

(ii) Do not take too many notes.

(iii) Use your own words.

(iv) Use the structure of a book or of class notes as the basis for your notes.

(v) Combine notes from books and class.

If an illustration, that is, a diagram, table, graph, or map, is considered important enough to be drawn by the instructor, it will almost certainly be important enough for you to make a copy of it.

It is likely that definitions will need to be known word-perfect, so record them exactly. The same applies for any statement that needs to be quoted accurately.

Although it is best to concentrate on general ideas when studying, you must also know many specific facts such as dates, names, events, and chemical symbols. You must have a note of *all* important facts.

While you need to record supporting material for important points, 'interesting' but unimportant details will clutter your notes and consume study time for no useful purpose. Discard all unimportant material.

When taking notes it is best to use your own words. The more you use your own words the more you will learn and understand. This is because you've had to think about what you have written. Using your own words is far more valuable than using someone else's words. Definitions are an exception to this rule.

An example of the point you have noted can act to refresh your memory at a later date. So, if you take notes on individual ball sports, then tennis and golf are examples that will help you recall the nature of individual ball sports.

Underlining points or writing in note form are good ways of highlighting. Do *not* underline in a book unless it belongs to you.

Don't put too much material into your notes; you will find it difficult to identify the important points from all the unimportant ones when you are revising.

As with class or lecture notes, when taking notes from books it is best to use your own words. The more you use your own words to express ideas, the more you will learn. Because it requires active thinking, it is better to take notes from books than to simply underline.

Use your class notes as the basis for taking notes from any book. Fit the new ideas you gain from a book into the notes you already have from class. If this is impossible, use the structure of the book (that is, headings and subheadings) to organize your notes.

Combining the notes you take from different sources will enable you to view the whole of the topic more clearly. Study time will thus be saved. Do not use too many sources: it can become confusing. In general, class notes and your textbooks will provide you with enough information.

## *V. Organization Of Your Notes*

(a) Structure:

(i) Use the outline form as shown.

> *I. First Main Point*
>
> *(a) First Supporting Point:*
>
> *(i) Illustration of first supporting point.*
>
> *(ii) Another illustration of supporting point.*
>
> *(b) Second Supporting Point:*
>
> *(i) Illustration of second supporting point.*
>
> *II. Second Main Point*
>
> *(a) First Supporting Point: etc.*

i) Use words and phrases only.

(iii) Show instructor's emphases.

(b) Other considerations:

(i) Develop a personal shorthand.

(ii) Label any personal comments you make.

(iii) Space notes out; leave room for additions.

## *VI. Editing and Reviewing Notes*

(a) Carefully edit notes as soon as possible.

You should try to structure your notes in a similar way to the outline opposite. Initially, this may be difficult in a class situation, but well-planned lessons will have a structure similar to this. The organization of your notes need not match that shown exactly because not every passage or lesson will be organized like this, and the number of supporting points and illustrations will vary, depending on the material you are taking notes from. However, use the outline form as your model.

Avoid writing complete sentences as this takes too much time. A key word or an idea expressed in a phrase is the best way of taking notes.

The points which an instructor emphasizes should be highlighted in some way, perhaps by underlining or by 'asterisking'. Of course, points which the instructor says are not important, but which are used to add interest, need not be noted.

In most subjects some words occur regularly. Develop a means of recording these words in shorthand, for example, Parliament could be recorded as Parl. or in some case just as P., Government as Govt, and so on. Be careful about overdoing this; too many abbreviations will lead to confusion, especially if you have been inconsistent or if one abbreviation can have two meanings.

It is a good idea to add a personal comment to your notes. But you *must* label them as such so that at a later date you can distinguish them from the notes.

Leave space in your class notes so you can add new information from textbooks or other sources.

If you do not look at your notes again until exam time you may find them difficult to understand. This may be due to poor handwriting, to a shorthand you have used and forgotten the meaning of, or because you've simply forgotten much of the material. Early editing, that is, tidying up handwriting, clarifying and keying abbreviations, and making the notes clearer, will help avoid the problem.

(b) Carefully review notes as soon as possible after taking them.

(c) Write a *short* summary.

## *VII. Listening and Note-taking*

(a) Division of time in class:
  (i) Listen most of the time.

  (ii) Keep writing to a minimum.

(b) The art of listening:
  (i) Physical and mental alertness.

  (ii) Concentrate.

  (iii) Think as you listen and write.

  (iv) Preview the topic.

## *VIII. Summary*

(a) Do something about learning to take good notes.

Review your notes at the earliest opportunity or when you have completed the topic. This will allow you to make corrections, to delete points which now seem unimportant, and to include points which you thought unimportant originally.

Transcribing (rewriting) is *not* necessary, except in special circumstances. Continually transcribing notes can amount to an excuse for not actually learning. However, it is useful to attempt to condense your notes into one or two short sentences.

Note-taking should *not* occupy most of your time in class — you should be listening more often than writing. Do not note everything. It is as important to listen to what is said, as it is to take complete notes.

Notes should be brief and to the point. You cannot listen effectively while you are writing. On the other hand, do not make your notes so brief that they are meaningless (see IV (a) (ii) above). Follow the instructions given in VI (a), (b), and (c) above to make sure your notes make sense.

The more alert you are physically and mentally, the better you will be able to listen. The better you listen, the more you will learn.

The more you concentrate on what is being said, the more likely you are to hear *all* important points.

As you listen to what is being said, you should be thinking about it too. You should be weighing it up, comparing it with your present knowledge, and seeing how it fits in with the overall structure of the topic. You can think much faster than anyone can speak, so you will have plenty of time to do this.

Whenever you get a chance, preview what is scheduled to be taught. If you have a little prior knowledge of the subject matter, it will make listening easier as your note-taking efficiency will increase and allow you time to assess each point as it is made.

So make an effort to improve your note-taking skills. By applying what you have learned in this section, you will evolve a form of note-taking that suits your personality and learning style. Knowing you have first-class, accurate notes is a great comfort when the time for revision comes.

## Part III

This part is designed to enable you to review what you have read in Part II of Section 5: Note-taking.

---

*Exercise I:* Fill in the blank spaces with the word you think has been left out. Note that the spaces are all the same size. The length of the space does not indicate the length of the word required.

Taking notes is an [1] _____ skill to learn. Notes should be taken whenever you are introduced to [2] _____ material which is relevant to your course, whether it is in books or in class. Instructors may tell you what is [3] _____ and it should be noted, but you [4] _____ rely on this. Learn to judge importance for yourself. Notes should be taken on loose-leaf paper with different subjects kept in [5] _____ files or binders. Although the number of notes you need to take will [6] _____ from subject to subject, the minimum requirement is to note [7] _____ those points which an instructor says are important. Your class notes should contain all the [8] _____ points made in class as well as [9] _____ details. They should [10] _____ consist only of headings. Any diagram, table, or graph that the instructor uses is [11] _____ noting. As well, [12] _____ definitions should be recorded accurately. Definitions and quotations are, in general, the [13] _____ information that should be recorded in this way, otherwise your [14] _____ words should be used. Important dates, figures, and formulae should be noted but minor details that will clutter your notes should be [15] _____.

When taking notes from a book you should note [16] _____ points of importance and their supporting details, either by underlining them or by [17] _____ them out on note paper. As with notes taken in class it is advisable to use your [18] _____ words. You should combine notes you have taken from different sources. Your notes should be structured in an [19] _____ form as shown in this part so that your notes are clear, concise, and easily followed. Your notes should consist mainly of words and phrases, [20] _____ complete sentences. It is important to edit actively and to review your notes as [21] _____ as possible after taking them. This will enable corrections to be made while aiding learning. It is also useful to write a short [22] _____ of your notes. Note-taking should [23] _____ occupy most of your class time; your writing should be kept to a minimum. Most of your time should be spent [24] _____.

---

*Exercise II*: Two paragraphs are shown below. Underline the topic sentence in each and then construct a brief set of notes for each of the paragraphs.

> Since the 1940s, far-reaching changes have taken place in the cinema. The Second World War affected the production, marketing and content of films; commercial television has arrived; and the sources of finance and methods of film production have changed. Last, and perhaps most interesting, much of the personnel of the film industry and the composition of the cinema audience have undergone changes.
>
> During this time, film has extended in a number of directions, and this extension is shown in the feature film. An increasing number of films have moved away from the conventional fantasy drama that was typical of the commercial cinema. Certainly, we still have our *James Bonds*, and films like *Ryan's Daughter* and *Love Story*, which are very much traditional cinema fare. But at the same time, we can see a selection of films that just a few years ago would never have appeared on the commercial screens. Examples are: *Kes*, *8½*, *The Red Desert*, *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, *Shame*, *The Touch*, *Hour of the Wolf*, *Dr Strangelove*, *Last Year in Marienbad*, *Shop on Main Street*, *Loves of a Blonde*, and *The Roundup*.

*Extract taken from 'The Cinema Since World War Two' by John Reid in* The Moving Image, *School Publications Branch, Department of Education, Wellington, 1974.*

---

Compare the words you included in *Exercise I* with the list given. The words you have written need *not* be *exactly* the same as those given but they *must* have the *same* meaning. For some of the spaces several words of similar meaning have been given. The numbers beside each space show the number of the word on the answer list. Also, compare your outline notes with the outline given.

---

## Solutions to Exercises

---

*Exercise I*: Suggested Words

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. important | 2. new/novel | 3. important |
| 4. cannot | 5. separate/different | 6. vary/differ/change |
| 7. all | 8. main/major/important | 9. supporting |
| 10. not | 11. worth | 12. all |
| 13. only | 14. own | 15. omitted |
| 16. all | 17. writing | 18. own |
| 19. outline | 20. not | 21. soon |
| 22. summary/precis | 23. not | 24. listening |

If any of the words you used are *different in meaning* to those given above, go back to Part II and reread it to find out why your answer was different.

---

*Exercise II:*

Topic sentences are:

Paragraph 1 — Sentence 1.
Paragraph 2 — Sentence 2.

Note Outline:

The Cinema Since World War Two:

I. Many changes have occurred.
   (a) Caused by variety of factors, e.g.:
      (i) TV;
      (ii) Changes in financing and production methods;
      (iii) Changes in personnel in film industry and audiences.
II. Different kinds of movies being made.
   (a) Fewer fantasy types like James Bond films, *Ryan's Daughter*.
   (b) More films of types like *Kes*, *8½*, *Red Desert*, etc.

---

You must remember that correct completion of this part does not ensure that your note-taking will improve. Now you must use what you have learned in the real note-taking situation; only then will you derive any benefit.

---

**Summary**

* Keep notes for different subjects separate.
* Make sure *all* main points are included.
* Keep detail to a minimum.
* Use an outline form for your notes.
* Edit and review your notes.
* Spend more time listening to the speaker than writing notes.

---

# Section 6 Studying for Examinations

## Part I

Many students think of study only when there is a test or exam to be taken. It is important to know how to prepare effectively for exams. Students prepare in different ways: some are more effective than others. The following short questionnaire will help you to assess how adequate are your methods of preparing for exams. The questionnaire consists of 20 statements to which you should respond by indicating how often you perform the action described. Using a ballpoint pen, draw a circle around the letter or figure that tells how often you do what is stated. To get maximum value from this exercise you must respond honestly and frankly. If you do not, the results will be worthless.

The five-point scale for the statements is as follows. N = Never or Almost Never, 1 = About ¼ of the time, 2 = About ½ (2/4) of the time, 3 = About ¾ of the time, and A = Always or Almost Always.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | When an exam is near I spend more time studying than I normally do. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 2. | When preparing for an exam I study for it on at least two separate occasions. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 3. | I think of questions which might be asked in the exam and try to answer them. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 4. | I rewrite at least part of my notes. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 5. | I do no study at all for an exam. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 6. | I use memory aids such as rhymes and mnemonics to help me remember. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 7. | I try to find out as much as I can about the exam beforehand. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 8. | Before an exam I try to find out how many questions will be asked, what kinds they will be, and so on. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 9. | If appropriate old exam papers are available, I look at them to see whether I can answer the questions. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 10. | I do the same amount of study for a multiple-choice type exam as I would for an essay type exam. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 11. | If I read over my notes at all, I do so only once. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 12. | I memorize rules, definitions, and formulae. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 13. | I concentrate on specific facts rather than main ideas. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 14. | I read my notes over several times. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 15. | I rewrite my notes in summary form. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 16. | I skim read those parts of the textbooks which cover what the exam will be on. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 17. | When I'm studying for an exam I concentrate on those parts I know already. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 18. | I try to guess what questions are likely to be asked. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 19. | I read through the important facts more than once. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 20. | I make sure I know what topics the exam will cover. | N 1 2 3 A |

**Now turn over the page and follow the instructions for marking your responses.**

## Marking and Interpretation

The circles you drew should be showing through onto this page and will appear around a number. Add all numbers that have circles showing around them. This total is your score for your method of exam preparation. Now, on the table, put a cross over the number which corresponds to or is one more than your total score. The interpretation of your score is given in the table.

| **Marking Key** | *Raw Score* | *Interpreting your Result* |
|---|---|---|
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 40 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 38 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 36 | If your score is 31 or more then you need not complete this section. However, even a maximum score of 40 may not necessarily indicate you had a perfect method of preparing for exams and you may still find it worthwhile continuing to read this section. |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 34 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 32 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 30 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 28 | |
| | 26 | If your score is between 21 and 30 your method of exam preparation is above minimal standard; however, there are several important weaknesses. Read this section carefully and complete the exercises. |
| | 24 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 22 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 20 | |
| | 18 | |
| | 16 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 14 | If your score is 20 or less there are many grave deficiencies in your method of exam preparation which means it does not come up to minimal standard. You should study this section carefully, completing the exercises and making a determined effort to improve your method of preparing for exams. |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 12 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 10 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 8 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 6 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 4 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 2 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 0 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | | |

# Part II

## Introduction

This part provides information on the most effective methods of preparing for exams. Your aim should be to use methods of study that will enable you to understand and to remember what you have been taught.

## Begin Your Preparation Early in the Course

Don't wait for the date of an exam to be announced before you start studying. If you wait, your chances of success are greatly reduced, because you'll find yourself faced with a large backlog of material to study in a short time. You should start preparing for your end-of-year exams on the first day of your course. This is not as bad as it sounds and it doesn't involve much more work than you already do. Studying for an exam, perhaps an entire year away, involves planning study times to provide for regular reviews of your learning and taking of useful notes (see *Section 2: Study Times*, *Section 3: Organization for Study*, and *Section 5: Note-taking).*

If your notes contain all the major points and supporting details and if you have done regular, brief reviews of the material, your exam preparation will be relatively easy.

Studying in this way results in easily remembered and clearly understood information that will be useful to you in later years. If you leave study until the last minute you will have to cram. This always results in short-term remembering only, with little or no understanding of the material, so that next year, or even next week, you will need to re-learn it.

You will take care of many other important aspects of preparing for an exam if you take good notes and plan your study throughout the course. You will know what points the instructor has stressed and therefore what topics are likely to be the subject of exam questions.

You will have a good idea of the amount of revision or study time to give to each topic. Most important of all, you will already know and understand most of what you need to study for each exam. Preparing for an exam then becomes merely a matter of refreshing your memory; the hard work has already been done.

## When an Examination is Announced

(a) *Find out the details*
As soon as you learn of an exam, you should find out as much as possible about it. It is worthwhile knowing exactly what will be examined. You should also find out the answers to these questions.

(i) How many questions will there be?
(ii) What type of questions will be asked: objective (e.g., true-false, multiple-choice), short-answer, or essay?
(iii) Will there be a choice of questions, or must all be answered?

Instructors should provide you with this information. It is only fair that you know in general terms what will be expected of you.

(b) *Use old examination papers*
If possible, get hold of old exam papers. Read through the questions and try to answer them. Reading old exam papers will give you an indication of how questions are likely to be phrased and what has been considered important in previous years. You should be careful about this, however, because sometimes a syllabus will change and different examiners may have differing ideas of importance. Nevertheless, familiarity with exam papers, their wording, general layout, and instructions will help you.

Learning the format of the exam and possible questions should not reduce the amount of time you will need to spend studying. Nor should it affect the way you study. However, knowing a little about what you are likely to be confronted with in the exam will increase your confidence.

## Set Up a Study Schedule for the Examination

Your next task is to set up a schedule for study. This is particularly important if you are sitting more than one exam in a short space of time. Firstly, you must increase the amount of time you have allotted to revision. At exam time your set course commitments, e.g., assign-

ments, may have been reduced, effectively giving you extra time. Start your study programme well in advance of the exam. How far in advance will depend on the importance of the exam, how many exams you have, and how many topics the exam will cover. It is always best to schedule more than one study session per exam, but the total amount of time you allot will depend on the importance and the range of topics to be covered. Make up a time schedule as shown in *Section 2: Study Times*. If you do this, you may well find that what seemed a difficult task has become manageable. Take care that planning study doesn't become a substitute for actually studying.

## Studying for Examinations

Before discussing the various ways of preparing for exams there are two points about objective (for example, multiple-choice, true-false) tests that are important.

(a) Don't believe that objective tests are easier, or require less study, than essay tests. Spend the same amount of time studying for all types of exam.

(b) Don't believe that you need to study only details for an objective test. This is not true. You should study in the same way for both types of test, that is, learn basic principles and main ideas as well as specific facts or details.

Before you start to study, make sure you are organized: that you have your notes arranged properly and all the paper and pens you need. Also, be prepared to use more than one method of study. Varying the ways you study will result in better remembering and greater understanding of information. Some of the ways revision can be done are outlined below, along with their advantages and disadvantages.

(a) *Review your notes by reading actively*
Read through your notes without writing anything. Do this more than once. Ensure that you read actively. You could perhaps use the SQ3R method of reading (see *Section 4: Reading Textbooks*). Concentrate on what you are reading. If your concentration is failing, stop and try another study method, or take a short break.

(b) *Review your notes by writing*
As you read through your notes, take shorter summarizing notes or jot down headings. Writing things down aids memory and helps concentration. Remember that you must review actively, that is, you must

think about what you are doing. It is useless to copy out your notes without thinking about them, you will learn virtually nothing. Guard against this.

(c) *Skim through your relevant textbooks for 'back-up' to your notes*
If you have taken good notes both from textbook and class lessons, then skimming through the textbook will be sufficient. At this stage, it is too late to start reading the textbook material right through — you should have done this long before.

(d) *Concentrate on learning what you do not know*
There is little value in continually relearning what you already know. When you have selected a topic for study give yourself a little test. Jot down the main points, definitions, formulae, and so on. Then check these against your notes. This will give you an indication of how much you know and where your knowledge is weak. Concentrate on learning what you *don't* know.

(e) *Think of questions which may be asked*
Your reading of previous exam papers and your knowledge of important points will help you in this. Try to answer questions that occur to you. If you think of an essay question, answer it in outline form; do not write a full essay, it will take too long.

(f) *Use of rhymes and mnemonics as memory aids*
It may be useful to devise a memory aid such as a rhyme, for example, 'In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue', or a mnemonic, for example, 'ROY G. BIV' for the colours of the rainbow. Use these aids sparingly. Relatively few things lend themselves to this technique, and if over-used it can cause more trouble than it is worth. It can be as difficult to remember the rhyme or mnemonic as it is to remember the information.

(g) *Question and answer sessions with others*
This way of studying is potentially useful, but has inherent dangers. The so-called learning situation can develop easily into a social occasion in which people try to outdo each other by asking meaningless and difficult questions, or it may result in discussions on all manner of topics entirely unrelated to study. Properly used, this technique may be useful, but you should be aware of the dangers.

(h) *Use your own words*
Your own words, phrases, and ways of saying things have the most meaning for you and are therefore remembered and understood more easily than phrases from textbooks. However, for formulae and defin-

itions, exact words or figures are required, you must rely on sheer memory to rote learn them. When using your own words, check that you have the same meaning as the original textbook wording.

(i) *Do not study late at night*
Plan to finish all your study before 10.00 p.m.; you will keep fresh and alert and study more effectively (see *Section 2: Study Times*).

(j) *Different study requirements for different subjects*
Analyse each subject for the most effective way of study. For example, mathematical subjects are best studied by doing practice problems, you will have comparatively little reading to do and few notes. It is not practical to summarize all the differences between various subjects here; for a more detailed (but not complete) review, read *Section 3: Organization for Study*.

(k) *Try to do old examination questions*
As mentioned earlier, looking through old exam papers can be useful as long as you remember that both the syllabus and other related things may have changed. If you see a question on a topic you have studied this year, try to answer it. Try to get somebody to mark your answer for you. There is value in an exercise such as this for both of you. Looking at old exam papers will help with your exam technique (see *Section 7: Examination Technique*). Estimate how long you would have had to answer a given question in a real exam and try to answer the question with this time limit. Don't worry if you do not get the question fully correct; learn from your mistakes so that you do better on the day of the exam.

## Summary

This part has stressed the importance of a long-term strategy in preparing for exams. Planning well ahead doesn't involve much extra effort, and results in less worry around exam time. You should know as much about the exam as possible beforehand, as this will make you feel more confident about how well you will do. Study will go more smoothly if you set up an exam study plan and use it. In addition, varying your study methods will make for a more interesting exercise.

## Part III

This part is designed to enable you to review what you have read in Part II of Section 6: Studying for Examinations.

---

*Exercise I:* Fill in the blank spaces with the word you think has been left out. Note that the spaces are all the same size. The length of the space does not indicate the length of the word required.

You should [1] _____ wait until the announcement of an exam before you start preparing for it. From the [2] _____ of the course you should have been taking [3] _____ in class and from textbooks. You should have been taking special note of those points the instructor regarded as [4] _____ and you should have been [5] _____ your notes periodically. If you have worked in this way, you will need to spend comparatively [6] _____ further effort preparing for exams and you will not have to [7] _____. When an exam is announced you should try to find out as [8] _____ as possible about it, for example, the number of questions, the types of question, the topics to be covered. You [9] _____ look at relevant old exam papers, these will give you some idea about what to expect in the exam.

Set up a study [10] _____ in the same way as you would for study during non-exam times. The details of the amount of time required will [11] _____ from one exam to another. Ensure that you do not substitute [12] _____ for studying.

When studying for exams, study in the [13] _____ way and for the [14] _____ amount of time whether the exam is to be of the objective or essay type. For both types, you will need to concentrate on [15] _____ principles as well as [16] _____ facts. Study in [17] _____ than one way, either by reading your notes actively, rewriting parts of your notes or writing a [18] _____ of them.

Do not [19] _____ notes mindlessly; this is time-wasting. Concentrate on parts you are [20] _____ sure of; think up questions or use old exam questions and attempt to [21] _____ them; devise memory aids only when they will really help; in general do [22] _____ study by asking and answering questions in company with others; use your [23] _____ words as much as possible although you will need to [24] _____ definitions, formulae, and so on. There is a need to study in [25] _____ ways for some subjects but the methods outlined here cover most situations. Finally, do not leave your study until [26] _____ at night; you need to be [27] _____ to study effectively.

*Exercise II:* In mid-June your instructor announces that you will have a two-hour exam in two weeks time on all the material you have covered during the year in a particular subject. List in general terms what you should do between this announcement and the exam.

---

Compare the words you included in *Exercise I* with the list given here. The words you have written need not be exactly the same as those given but they must have the same meaning. For some of the spaces several words of similar meaning have been given. The numbers beside each space show the number of the word on the answer list. Also, compare what you think should be done in preparation for the exam with the list given.

---

## Solutions to Exercises

---

*Exercise I:* Suggested words

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. not | 2. start/beginning | 3. notes |
| 4. important | 5. reviewing/revising | 6. little |
| 7. cram | 8. much | 9. should |
| 10. schedule/plan | 11. vary/differ | 12. planning |
| 13. same | 14. same | 15. general |
| 16. specific | 17. more | 18. summary/precis |
| 19. copy | 20. not | 21. answer |
| 22. not | 23. own | 24. memorize |
| 25. different | 26. late | 27. fresh/alert |

If any of the words you used are different in meaning to those given above, go back to Part II and reread it to find out why your answer was different.

---

*Exercise II:* The steps you should take in preparation for the exam are:

(a) Make sure you know details of the exam, that is, type of question, number of questions, topics to be covered, and so on.
(b) Set up an examination study schedule allowing sufficient time for study.
(c) Locate and organize your notes.
(d) Study for the exam using more than one of the methods outlined in Section 6.

---

You must remember that correct completion of this part does not ensure that your studying will improve. You must now use what you have learned in the real study situation, only then will you derive any benefit.

---

**Turn over the page for the summary.**

**Summary**

- Preparation for exams should begin at the start of the course.
- Plan your study and ensure you have useful notes.
- Find out as much as possible about the exams you are going to sit.
- Make up a study schedule and use it.
- Study in a variety of ways.

---

# Section 7 Examination Technique

## Part I

Good exams are not designed to trick you; the examiner genuinely wants to know how much you have understood. But there are many ways in which you can perform poorly in an exam even when you know the answers. The following short questionnaire will help you to assess the adequacy of your exam technique. The questionnaire consists of 20 statements to which you should respond by indicating how often you perform the action described. Using a ballpoint pen, draw a circle around the letter or figure that tells how often you do what is stated. To get maximum value from this exercise you must respond honestly and frankly. If you do not, the results will be worthless.

The five-point scale for the statements is as follows. N = Never or Almost Never, 1 = About ¼ of the time, 2 = About ½ (2/4) of the time, 3 = About ¾ of the time, and A = Always or Almost Always.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | In an essay exam I read through all questions there are before I start writing. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 2. | I plan my time during an exam so I can at least attempt all the required questions. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 3. | I answer a question in a multiple-choice exam only if I know the answer. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 4. | I make a brief outline of my essay answers before I start writing them. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 5. | If I have time, I check my answers before handing in my paper. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 6. | I make sure I know how many marks each question is worth. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 7. | I answer fewer questions than the exam instructions require me to. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 8. | In a multiple-choice question I work out the answer and then look at the alternatives to see if my answer is there. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 9. | I very carefully note the wording of each question. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 10. | The first questions I answer are those that I am most likely to find difficult. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 11. | I spend more time on questions to which I know the answers than on questions that are worth more marks. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 12. | I answer the questions in a multiple-choice type exam in the order they appear. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 13. | In multiple-choice tests I make sure I know how to mark the answers correctly. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 14. | I take special note of instructions like 'compare', 'discuss', and 'summarize'. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 15. | In an exam I start answering questions before I have read the instructions. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 16. | If I finish an exam ahead of time, I hand in the paper immediately. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 17. | When I don't know the answer to a multiple-choice question I look for words or phrases in the question which might give a clue to the answer. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 18. | In a written exam I spend time checking details such as grammar or spelling before I've finished answering all the questions. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 19. | In a multiple-choice question I read all the alternatives even though I think one of the first alternatives is correct. | N 1 2 3 A |
| 20. | When my exam paper is returned, I go over questions on which I did poorly. | N 1 2 3 A |

**Now turn over the page and follow the instructions for marking your responses.**

## Marking and Interpretation

The circles you drew should be showing through onto this page and will appear around a number. Add all numbers that have circles showing around them. This total is your score for your examination technique. Now, on the table, put a cross over the number which corresponds to or is one more than your total score. The interpretation of your score is given on the table.

| Marking Key | *Raw Score* | *Interpreting your Result* |
|---|---|---|
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 40 | If your score is 35 or more then you need not complete this section. However, even a maximum score of 40 may not necessarily indicate a perfect exam technique and you may still find it worthwhile to read this section. |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 38 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 36 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 34 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 32 | If your score is between 25 and 34 your exam technique is above minimal standard, however, there are several important weaknesses. Read this section carefully and complete the exercises. |
| | 30 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 28 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 26 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 24 | |
| | 22 | |
| | 20 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 18 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 16 | If your score is 24 or less there are many grave deficiencies in your exam technique which means it does not come up to minimal standard. You should study this section carefully, completing the exercises and making a determined effort to improve the way you sit exams. |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 14 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 12 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 10 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | 8 | |
| | 6 | |
| | 4 | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | 2 | |
| | 0 | |
| 0 0 0 1 2 | | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | | |
| 2 1 0 0 0 | | |

# Part II

## Introduction

You will meet with tests or exams of one kind or another throughout your life. The advice given in this part is aimed at helping you show accurately how much you know when you are faced with a formal written exam.

This part will help you to identify the mistakes you might make while sitting an exam and provides advice on how to avoid making mistakes.

## Before going into the examination room

1. Do not study the evening prior to an exam, except for a brief review of your notes. Make sure you have a good night's sleep. You cannot give a true account of what you have learned if you are tired.
2. Make sure you have all the materials you are allowed or are supposed to take into the exam room with you. This includes spare pens, pencils, rulers, maths tables, and so on. A pen that runs dry, or a pencil that breaks, can take several minutes to replace. You should check with your instructors *before* the exam to find out exactly what you are allowed, or supposed to bring with you.
3. Plan to arrive at the exam room well before the scheduled starting time. This will give you time to settle down and relax a little.
4. If possible, wear a watch in case there is no clock in the exam room. During an exam it is important to keep track of time.
5. While a little anxiety before an exam is a good sign (it shows you are concerned about the exam and not over-confident), you should try to relax as much as possible. Use ways of relaxing that you find most helpful. Often, the fear of forgetting causes the most anxiety. However, if you really *know* something you will almost certainly recall it when you need to. So relax. If you feel exam worries are significantly affecting your performance, seek advice from people trained to help you with these things.

## When you get into the examination room

1. The examiner should have checked to make sure that the room is suitable for testing, that is, the temperature, ventilation, and light are adequate. If you feel uncomfortable because of any of these things or are bothered by glare or strong sunlight, don't just suffer it, get something done about it. Ask the person in charge to help you and if necessary change your seat. You cannot give a true account of what your know if you are distracted by physical discomforts. The exam room should conform to the requirements for a good place to study (see *Section 1: The Place to Study*).
2. Check the timing system. Generally, a room clock will be used to time the exam, so work out your timings (see below) on that clock rather than on your own watch. If there is no clock in the room and you do not have a watch, ask the examiner how you keep track of time during the exam. Often times are written on the blackboard and crossed off as time passes.
3. Make sure you have blank paper for making outlines of essay answers or for doing rough working.

## When you are given the examination paper

1. Normally you will be given time to read the instructions before the exam starts. Carefully read the instructions to the exam paper. Any misunderstanding of, or failure to follow, the directions will result in lost marks. Make sure you know *all* of the following:
   (a) The number of questions in the exam paper and whether they are arranged in sections.
   (b) How many questions in total you must answer and how many you must answer from each section.
   (c) Whether there are compulsory questions.
   (d) Whether there is a specified order of answering questions.
   (e) What type of questions there are — objective (for example, multiple-choice), paragraph, essay, or combinations of these.
   (f) How many marks each question is worth.
   (g) How your answers are to be shown. This is especially important if computer-scored answer sheets are being used.
   (h) How the answer sheets and/or answer booklets are to be headed.
   (i) Where your code number (if applicable) is to be written.

(j) Whether each essay answer should begin on a new leaf or a new page.
(k) Whether a margin should be left on each page.

Not all these points will be relevant for any given exam, but you should make sure that, if the directions include such information, you know *exactly* what is required.

Be careful that your reading of old exam papers has not led you to false expectations. Exam paper instructions vary from year to year, so although looking at old papers is useful, you cannot be sure of the exact arrangement of the exam paper you are taking before you read it.

2. Plan your time carefully. This is very important and must be done *accurately*. Failure to plan your time can result in questions either being left out or rushed through. Obviously, no marks are given for questions that have not been attempted.

The best way to divide your time is on the basis of the number of marks allocated to each question. In addition, you should ensure that you have a little time at the end of the test for checking. For example, if an exam requires you to answer five questions in three hours and each is worth 20 marks, you should allot 30 minutes to answering each question ($30 \times 5 = 150$ minutes). This leaves 30 minutes to reread your answers, add to them if necessary, and generally check what you have written. Similarly, if you have to answer four questions in three hours and the first question is worth twice as many marks as the rest, you should spend 60 minutes on the first question and 30 minutes on the other three. Again this will leave 30 minutes for you to check your answers.

Exam instructions and layout of papers vary a great deal and the method of allotting time just described may not always be completely appropriate. Your best course of action is to become familiar with the various layouts of exam papers and to gain experience in allocating time.

3. Read the essay questions *carefully*. This is essential, especially if there is a choice of questions. Your choice of questions to answer is crucial. It is most important to select questions that you are best able to answer.

Make your decisions quickly. Tick those questions that you think you can do well and mark with a cross those questions that you think you cannot do at all or only poorly. This will help you to select questions, and also to decide on the order in which they should be attempted.

Make sure your choice of questions to answer follows the instructions, for example, one question from Section A and two from Section B, and so on. Next decide on the order in which you will answer the questions. In essay exams, firstly answer those you consider the easiest. This gives you the confidence that comes from knowing you have some marks already. Make sure you number your answers correctly. If you number your answer incorrectly or fail to number it at all, you will get no marks for your work. If the exam, or part of the exam, is in objective or multiple-choice form, then you can leave reading the questions until you are ready to answer them. You should answer these types of questions in the order they appear in the exam paper.

## Answering the questions

### 1. *Essay/Short answer questions*

(a) The wording of the question is very important. You must consider the words in the question which indicate the emphasis required in your answer. Examples of these key words are: compare, contrast, discuss, summarize, outline. Do not just write all you know about a topic. Your answer must be structured to satisfy the wording of the question. So carefully read the question and decide what kind of answer the examiner wants. The following list will help:

| *Key Word* | *Meaning* |
|---|---|
| define | — give the exact meaning; |
| analyze examine | — look closely and give the essential features; |
| compare contrast | — give the main similarities and differences; |
| illustrate | — explain by giving examples; |
| describe discuss explain | — give a detailed account of the main features or principles; |
| outline | — give the main features or principles; |
| review summarize | — give a general account of main features or principles; |
| trace | — give a step-by-step account of the development |
| list | — give a catalogue. |

(b) Before you begin writing, make an outline on scrap paper. Jot down the main headings and the main points of your answer. Do not start to write your essay until you know how you are going to begin and end your answer.
(c) Express yourself *simply*. Make sure all the relevant facts are included to support your answer. Do not 'pad' your answer; contrary to popular opinion, this fools no one.
(d) Take care with handwriting and spelling. Attention to these will make your answers easier to read, and, therefore, it will be easier for the marker to decide on the worth of your answer.
(e) Make your answer the length and type specified. If short notes are asked for, then *short* notes are required. If you are asked to answer something in, say 100 words, then write about 100 words; do not write 200 or more.

## 2. *Objective (for example, multiple-choice) questions*

(a) Make sure you know the method of answering the questions, for example, by ticking or crossing in boxes, by writing a letter, or by blacking in a space. If your mark extends into two boxes, the letter you write is unclear, or the space you blacken is not completely covered (especially if the answers are to be marked by computer), you may not get credit, even though you knew the answer.
(b) Read each question carefully. Take note of whether the answer you are to choose is the *best* one or the *only true or correct* one. Be especially wary of negatives, i.e., questions which include phrases like 'Which of these is *not* . . .' or 'All of these *except* . . .'; it is easy to overlook the negative aspect.
(c) Take note of any word or words in the question that may give a clue to the answer. Grammar can give you a clue. If a question ends in 'an', yet one of the possible answers begins with a consonant, such an answer cannot be correct. If a question is stated in the plural, but an option is stated in the singular, once again such an answer cannot be correct. Words such as 'never' or 'always' also tend to lead to correct answers because very few things ever occur 'never' or 'always'. This is particularly so in true-false type questions.

In *good* objective questions these clues will not appear, but, if they do, use them to *your* advantage.
(d) Do not waste time looking for clever little traps; good questions will not contain any.
(e) Read *all* the alternatives, even if you think the first one is correct. You may be in error or there could be a better answer further on.
(f) If you do not know the answer to a question, make a calculated

guess (unless the instructions tell you that marks will be taken off if you are wrong). Your 'guessing' should be done by eliminating answers which you think are certainly wrong. Guess only between those you cannot eliminate. This increases your chances of giving the correct answer.

(g) If you decide that the answer you have given is incorrect, then change it, but only after *careful* consideration. Although first answers are often correct, changes made after *careful* consideration usually result in higher marks.

(h) Answer *all* questions, unless the instructions specify that marks will be taken off for incorrect answers.

(i) Answer questions as you come to them, even if you are not sure of the answer. If you leave a question unanswered you may find you do not have time to return to it. If you feel unsure about the answer to any question, write the answer you think is most likely and note the number of the question so you can be sure you come back to it later if you have time.

### 3. *Problems (for example, numerical)*

(a) Make sure you write down any formulae that you need and which are not provided in the exam paper as soon as you can.

(b) If you cannot see quickly how to do a problem, leave it, and return to it later.

(c) Write something in answer to every problem. Stating part of the correct formulae may get you one mark, and every mark is worth having.

(d) Label all working stages clearly so they can be followed easily by the marker.

### 4. *Practical exams*

There is a wide variety of practical exams possible, ranging from a dissection to starting a car motor or welding a joint. Specific suggestion for such a wide range of exercises is beyond the scope of this section, however, the various general rules outlined above still apply. It is still vitally important to plan your time and to know exactly what you must do. In general it is wise to approach any exercise cautiously, mainly because it is usually very difficult to correct mistakes in practical tests. You will have no opportunity to erase your mistakes and re-write your answer as you can in essay questions. A mistake in measuring or a hasty inaccurate cut is permanent: you will not normally have the opportunity to cut the length again. Also in practical tests your work is being observed continuously and mistakes noted as

they occur. You may lose marks if you have to make two attempts at cutting a piece of metal, starting an engine, or in setting up your apparatus. So be even more careful with reading and checking instructions than you are with written exams.

## Near the end of the examination

1. Make sure you have attempted all the questions that you had to do. You will find it easier to get the first five marks for a 20-mark essay question or a problem than it is to get the last few marks, that is, to go from 15 to 20, and every question or part-question left out means marks that you cannot get.
2. Check *all* your answers. Look for any words that are illegible or misspelt. If *you* have difficulty in reading and understanding your answer, then the marker will find it even harder. If you have time, improve the legibility of your writing where necessary.
3. Make sure all questions are properly numbered. Unnumbered questions may not be marked.
4. *Never* leave the exam room before time is up. Continual checking can only help, but do not try to rewrite large parts of your answers unless you have enough time to complete your rewriting.

## When your papers are returned

1. Make an effort to check up on where you lost your marks. Did you lose them all on one question? Was it because you misread or misunderstood the question? Such errors indicate the efficiency of your exam technique. Finding out your mistakes ensures that you are less likely to make them again.
2. Note errors in your knowledge and try to correct these. If you are unsure of why you lost marks on a question, find out. Ask your instructor what the 'ideal' answer would have been like.

## Summary

Even though you have prepared thoroughly for an exam, there are a number of ways you can reduce your marks simply by not using good

exam techniques. This part has shown you ways of capitalizing on the study effort you have put in, so that your exam performance gives a true indication of how much you have learnt. Next time you sit an exam use the techniques outlined in this part; you may notice a considerable improvement in your marks.

## Part III

This part is designed to enable you to review what you have read in Part II of Section 7: Examination Technique.

---

*Exercise I:* Fill in the blank spaces with the word you think has been left out. Note that the spaces are all the same size; the length of the space does not indicate the length of the word required.

Poor exam technique will [1] _____ your score for a test even when you know the correct answers to the questions. There are a number of ways you can [2] _____ your examination technique that require only a little planning.

You should [3] _____ ahead to ensure that you arrive at the place of the exam early and that you have [4] _____ the equipment that you may need and are allowed. When you are in the exam room, make sure that you are seated as [5] _____ as possible and that there is a means of telling the time accurately. You may need [6] _____ paper even if the test is an essay one. When you are given the exam paper, read the directions very [7] _____ so that you know how many questions are to be answered, how to answer them, and other specific instructions. Next comes one of the most important steps of them all. You must [8] _____ your time so that you do not spend too [9] _____ time on any question and not [10] _____ on another. The best way to allot your time is on the basis of the number of [11] _____ each question is worth. There should always be a little [12] _____ time allotted for checking through your answers. Now read the questions very [13] _____ and decide which ones are the [14] _____ for you to answer. In an essay test it is best to answer the [15] _____ questions first unless you have to answer questions in a particular order. In an objective test it is best to answer questions in the [16] _____ they appear on the paper. In an essay test, the wording of the question is very important and you should make sure you [17] _____ the intention of the examiner. You should make an [18] _____ of your answers on a sheet of paper [19] _____ you start writing. In an objective test read the question and all alternatives carefully. Eliminate the alternatives that you are sure are [20] _____ and [21] _____ from the remainder. Changing your answers will increase your score only if you are [22] _____ in changing. In problem questions leave the [23] _____ ones until last but make sure you attempt [24] _____ problem you are expected to do. Your layout, writing, and spelling are [25] _____ and even in

**Turn over the page.**

multiple-choice tests the answers you give must be [26] _____ and easy to read. Near the end of the exam you should [27] _____ as many of your answers as possible, to eliminate any unintentional errors which may have occurred. In practical exams be extremely [28] _____ with planning and reading instructions. Normally you will [29] _____ be able to correct mistakes you make. Finally, when your papers are returned, [30] _____ your errors.

*Exercise II*: You are handed an exam paper at 9.20 a.m. with 10 minutes to read it. The instructions are as follows:

> Time allowed: 3 hours
>
> You are to answer all questions in Section A and two questions from any *two* of Sections B, C, D, or E.
>
> All questions are worth 20 marks. You are to answer Section A first. The other questions may be answered in any order. Start each answer on a new leaf.

You find that Section A consists of 40 multiple-choice questions and that Sections B, C, D, and E each consist of four essay questions. How should you plan to sit this exam?

Now compare the words you included in *Exercise I* with the list given. The words you have written need not be exactly the same as those given but they must have the same meaning. For some of the spaces several words of similar meaning have been given. The numbers beside each space show the number of the word on the answer list. Also, compare the way you would sit the exam described in *Exercise II* with the method given there.

## Solutions to Exercises

*Exercise I*: Suggested Words

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. reduce/lower | 2. improve | 3. plan |
| 4. all | 5. comfortably | 6. spare/scrap |
| 7. carefully | 8. plan/arrange | 9. much |
| 10. enough | 11. marks | 12. extra/additional |
| 13. carefully | 14. easiest | 15. easy |
| 16. order | 17. understand/comprehend | 18. outline |
| 19. before | 20. wrong/incorrect | 21. choose |
| 22. careful | 23. difficult/hard | 24. every |
| 25. important | 26. clear | 27. check/review |
| 28. careful | 29. not | 30. check/review |

If any of the words you have used are *different in meaning* to those given above, go back to Part II and reread it to find out why your answer was different.

*Exercise II*. You should proceed as follows:

(a) Read all the questions in Sections B, C, D, and E.
(b) Mark those questions you think you can answer with a tick and those you cannot do with a cross.
(c) Select the two sections which have the most questions you think you can answer easily.
(d) Choose the two questions in each of these sections you think you are best able to answer.
(e) Put these four questions in order of ease for you.
(f) Plan your time as follows:

| | Start: | Finish: |
|---|---|---|
| Section A — 20 marks | 9.30 a.m. | 10.05 a.m. |
| 1st essay (the easiest) | 10.05 a.m. | 10.35 a.m. |
| 2nd essay | 10.35 a.m. | 11.05 a.m. |
| 3rd essay | 11.05 a.m. | 11.35 a.m. |
| 4th essay (the hardest) | 11.35 a.m. | 12.05 p.m. |
| Checking, etc. | 12.05 p.m. | 12.30 p.m. |

(g) Answer each question in Section A in order.
(h) Spend the first 3-5 minutes on each of your essay questions jotting down headings and important points to make an outline of your answer.
(i) Number each question and start it on a new leaf.

---

You must remember that correct completion of this part does not, by itself, ensure that your exam technique will improve. You must now use what you have learned in the real exam situation; only then will you derive any benefit.

---

**Summary**

- Take with you everything you will need for an examination.
- Read the exam directions very carefully.
- Select the easiest questions to do with care and thought.
- Number your questions.
- Take care with the organization of answers.
- Pay attention to handwriting and spelling.

---

SWOT: Study Without Tears *is a self-involvement handbook for tertiary-level students who want to improve their study practices, examination technique and learning efficiency. The handbook is designed to utilize the procedures employed so successfully in the* Study Habits Evaluation and Instruction Kit (SHE!K), *an integrated package of materials used by senior pupils in New Zealand and Australian secondary schools.* SWOT *involves a check on competency, identification of poor study practices, and provides advice and guidance followed by exercises to consolidate learning of the instructional material.*

SWOT *recognizes that study is a very personal activity. While no two people study in exactly the same way, common elements and strategies which work for most students can be identified. Hence, the handbook is written in a helpful, non-prescriptive style. If offers useful practical suggestions and provides guidelines to successful study which are supported by learning theory and research.*

SWOT *comprises seven separate sections: 1. The Place of Study, 2. Study Times, 3. Organization for Study, 4. Reading Textbooks, 5. Note-taking, 6. Studying for Examinations, and 7. Examination Technique.*

*A careful reading of* SWOT, *successful completion of the practice exercises, and adoption of pertinent suggestions, while not guaranteeing 'A' grades and effortless examination passes, will help every student to make the most of his or her abilities.*

*At the time of writing the authors were all senior research staff at the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, Wellington.*

New Zealand Council for Educational Research